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ABSTRACT

This guide, for grades 6 and above, helps students experience culture and cultural diversity through projects and discussion and reflection activities as an alternative to reading. Students become aware of individual cultural identities including their strengths and weaknesses. Students develop the skills necessary to think critically about culture and to resolve cultural disagreements without resorting to insults or violence. The guide helps students see cultural groups different from their own as a learning opportunity. The guide is divided into five chapters: (1) "Some Definitions"; (2) "Culture, Identity, and You"; (3) "Critical Thinking"; (4) "Conflict Resolution"; and (5) "Putting It All Together." Each chapter offers in-depth explanations of elements to be taught. The discussion and reflection sections suggest ways to share the information with students. In addition, the student project sections address students directly. The projects are designed to lead students to incorporate what they have learned and to help them realize the choices they can make about cultural diversity. Contains 30 references.(BT)

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TAPESTRIES

Exploring Identity and Culture in the Classroom

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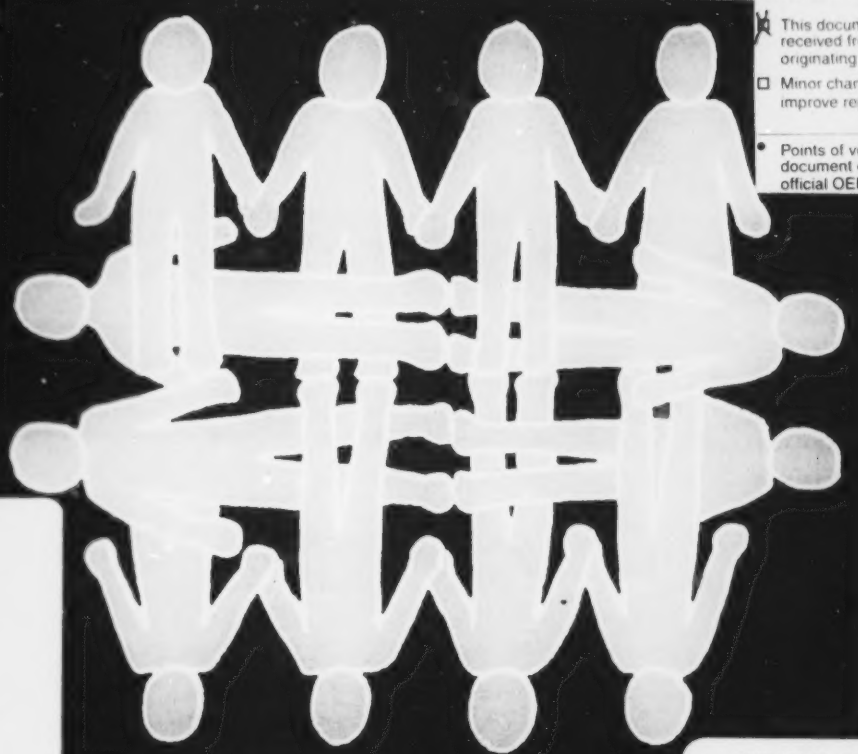

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Stewart Barr

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Tapestries

Tapestries

Exploring Identity
and Culture
in the Classroom

Stewart Barr

REACHING THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL
Tucson, Arizona

Tapestries
Exploring Identity and Culture in the Classroom

Grades 6–12

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To my wife, Stacy,
without whose help,
advice, and tolerance,
Tapestries would
have been impossible.

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Contents

Introduction	1
1. Some Definitions	11
2. Culture, Identity, and You	27
3. Critical Thinking	69
4. Conflict Resolution	109
5. Putting It All Together	125
Bibliography	149

Introduction

In the last few decades, mankind has been overcome by the most change in its entire history. Modern science and technology have created so close a network of communication, transport, economic interdependence, and potential nuclear destruction—that planet earth, on its journey through infinity, has acquired the intimacy, the fellowship and the vulnerability of a spaceship.

—Barbara Ward
Cultural Anthropology

Multiculturalism asserts that people with different roots can coexist, that they can learn to read the image-banks of others, that they can and should look across the frontiers of race, language, gender, and age without prejudice or illusion, and learn to think against the background of a hybridized society. It proposes—modestly enough—that some of the most interesting things in history and culture happen at the interface between cultures. It wants to study border situations, not only because they are fascinating in themselves, but because understanding them may bring with it a little hope for the world.

—Robert Hughes
Culture of Complaint

The realization of the importance of multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural education has had a profound effect on curriculum development at all grade levels in the last fifteen years. The general theory of how to "teach multiculturalism" is usually something along these lines: expose students to information about other cultures so that students will understand these other cultures better, and therefore the students will become more tolerant and less prejudicial. In a multicultural nation such as the United States, it would seem obvious that cross-cultural exposure of this type should be a fundamental part of the educational process.

Unfortunately, cross-cultural learning materials are usually introduced into the classroom in such a way that the cultures under study become abstracts—funny people from faraway lands whose way of living has little relevance to students or to their understanding of their fellow students or their immediate world. This approach—using textbooks to teach *about* culture—doesn't give students the tools for *interacting with* cultures other than their own, which is the central reason for putting a multicultural spin on education in the first place: to help students cope with the increasing diversity of school districts, the workplace, and their homes. The usual approach also ignores the central fact that we are all *part of* a culture, no matter who we are. What better learning tool could a teacher ask for: it's free and every student already has one.

Why Teach Culture in the Classroom at All?

Children start their cultural education as soon as they begin to become conscious of their surroundings, which of course include their family. In becoming part of the family group, the child starts to become acculturated as he or she learns about the family's values, religion, stories, morals, structure, and so forth. The long process of introduction to the child's culture begins at this point, and continues—usually unhindered—until the child starts school. When the child starts school, however, he or she may find that he or she does not belong to

the dominant cultural group. The cultural truths the child learned before starting school may be called into question.

It is easy for children to approach a dilemma of this kind—confronting two conflicting cultures—as an either/or situation: "I must choose either my culture or the dominant one. Only one of them can be 'right.'" If, as children or as adults, we buy into this either/or dilemma—my culture or theirs—we will certainly fail to identify with either one, which will undermine possession of any cultural identity at all, creating a dangerous situation.

Lack of cultural identity tends to lead to a lack of personal identity and self-esteem. It is normal for adolescents to rebel against their cultural backgrounds, but children who lose their cultural identities to this either/or struggle before or during this period of rebellion are likely to gravitate to any other culture or cultural substitute that will provide even an ounce of self-esteem and identity, including a gang culture.

For reasons such as these, students coming into classes often have no clue about their own cultures or even what culture is. Students need to become aware of their own cultures and their own identities before learning about other cultures can have any real meaning. Although students are not finding meaning in their own or others' cultures, they are still learning how to judge people who are enmeshed in cultures different from their own. When you ask students which of two particular cultures is better, they are apt to respond by saying, "You shouldn't judge them like that." However, if you present a specific example of a cultural norm different from their own, such as infanticide, they will contradict their earlier statement by arguing that this practice is wrong and should be stopped. It is as if they have two conflicting values—cultural relativism and cultural judgment—that cannot be resolved.

Such a student becomes an adult who talks about the relativity of cultural values and at the same time is judgmental and intolerant of others. Such a person may have learned about other cultures in schools but does not understand anything about multiculturalism. In the context of this either/or dilemma, multiculturalism can be seen as a threat to one's own identity.

Ideally, multiculturalism does not present this either/or dilemma. Historically, the most successful forms of multiculturalism have given people a chance to forge an identity in *both* their cultures and the dominant—or "mass"—culture, using the best parts from each one to solve particular problems with greater creativity than is available in a monocultural society.

Fifty years ago, most children went to schools where all the students shared the same cultural norms and values. Since that time, the movement of families around the country to new jobs or new lifestyles, the break-up of traditional family units, social mobility, break-up of neighborhoods, and school integration have combined to create school populations that are mixed and full of multiple cultures. These factors make the schools an ideal place in which to learn the issues and importance of multiculturalism.

Goals

I have seen students assigned to read about different cultures in textbooks, and they can't wait to forget the information. I wanted to create a guidebook that would allow a teacher and students to *experience* culture and cultural diversity instead of reading about it—I wanted them to get swept up in that process of discovery. This book offers just such an enriching experience.

Educational Objectives

1. To expand students' awareness of their individual cultural identities
2. To increase students' base of knowledge about their cultural identities and about the strengths and weaknesses of their cultures in today's world
3. To deepen students' understanding of cultural groups other than their own, especially those that are present in their classrooms

4. To help students develop the skills necessary for critical thinking about culture, including their own, without equating critical thinking with personal attack
5. To help students see cultural groups different from their own as opportunities to learn instead of as threats
6. To introduce students to ways they can recognize their contributions to misunderstandings, conflicts, and conflict resolution
7. To help students develop the skills necessary to resolve cultural disagreements without resorting to insults or violence

Set-Up

To meet these objectives, *Tapestries* is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces students to key terms, including *culture, society,* and *multiculturalism*. The chapter presents historical and anthropological perspectives and encourages students to explore their own definitions.

In chapter 2, *culture* moves from an abstract concept to a hands-on exploration. In-class lectures and out-of-class projects guide student exploration into their individual cultural backgrounds. Historical and contemporary cross-cultural examples illustrate key ideas, and projects encourage students to bring into class stories and information from home about their family traditions, ethics, food, gender and other roles, religion, and other aspects of their cultures. In-class small-group comparisons help students move through self-awareness into an awareness of how their cultures differ from and are similar to those of their classmates.

Chapter 3 teaches specific critical thinking skills to give students an alternative to thinking emotionally about cultural conflicts. A series of easy-to-understand "dos" and "don'ts" is accompanied by projects in which students evaluate the critical thinking skills of themselves, their classmates, and editorial writers for newspapers. Chapter 4 provides students with conflict resolution skills, including active listening and negotiation, that they learn to apply to cultural conflict situations.

In chapter 5, students put their new critical thinking and conflict resolution skills to the test. They cooperate to create a class culture in stages—by resolving cultural differences first in small groups, then with the whole class. Such an experience gives students hands-on experience in the dynamic way in which cultures develop and change to suit the needs of their members, as well as illustrating the profound awareness that students may choose and develop their own cultural identities—they do not have to be controlled by cultural constructs.

How to Use This Book

This book is a student activity guide as well as a teaching manual. Each chapter has in-depth explanations of several elements that you will want to understand before you teach them to your students. The Discussion and Reflection sections suggest ways to share the information with your students. These suggestions are written to involve your students on emotional and personal levels, to make the information more important to them. Remember, however, that these sections offer suggestions only; you may come up with ways to share the information that are more appropriate for your students and your educational setting.

The Student Project sections address the students directly. They are designed to lead students to incorporate what they have learned and to help them realize the choices they have. They are set on separate pages to facilitate photocopying.

A Record of Students' Journeys

Before you begin the unit, have students make individual scrapbooks in which to collect ideas, thoughts, definitions, pictures, and anything else they find important throughout this journey of cultural discovery. The scrapbook can be a spiral-bound notebook or sheets of loose-leaf paper stapled together, but it should allow for a variety of materials, not just written entries.

Part of the scrapbooks will be a journal in which students respond to discussion questions, keep notes on their projects, and write their reflections about what they are learning. In many cases, these journals will be your only opportunity to assess whether students are learning, so impress upon students the importance of taking great care of their scrapbooks and turning them in. You will want students to save all of their responses; many of the activities require them to compare early entries to later entries to discern how their opinions have changed. After you present each new concept, give students time to add a new section to their scrapbooks.

Have your students help you create a learning center about culture. Bring in old magazines from which to cut out pictures, films that illustrate or represent a variety of cultures, posters, books and other reference materials—let your imaginations guide you. Students may choose to visit the learning center to find new ways to add to their scrapbooks.

Tolerance versus Acceptance

It is my hope that through the lectures and projects in this book, students will learn to creatively combine the virtues of tolerance, compassion, and understanding with the sure knowledge that they are each a member of a unique and worthwhile culture. One of the key concepts this book brings into the classroom is the idea of the difference between tolerance and acceptance. Children—and adults—need to know that it is okay to disagree with a different culture's values or practices; we need to be able to disagree without it being automatically assumed that we devalue the culture in question. We need to remember that saying "There is room for the existence of those beliefs in the world" is not the same thing as saying "I agree with those beliefs." It is this kind of forgetfulness that creates some of the feelings of fear and intrusion in students who are told "all they need to know about multiculturalism" by a textbook.

Student Project

You are going to make a scrapbook in which you will collect ideas, thoughts, definitions, pictures, and anything else you wish to include to reflect what you learn and think about culture. You may get a spiral-bound notebook or a binder, or you may staple sheets of loose-leaf paper together. However you choose to do it, allow for a variety of materials, not just written entries. Part of your scrapbook will be a journal, and you will respond to questions and record your thoughts as we complete this unit. Be sure to date and title each exercise you do so you can see the progress you make over time. I will ask to see your scrapbook or parts of your scrapbook as we go along, so be sure to have them with you at all times.

Decorate the cover of your culture scrapbook to show a variety of pieces of the cultural pie. You may use cut-out pictures, drawings, designs, symbols—anything that represents culture in general, your own culture, a culture different from your own that you want to learn more about, or a variety of cultures. The cover is your chance to be creative. You may add to or change the cover as you learn more throughout this unit.

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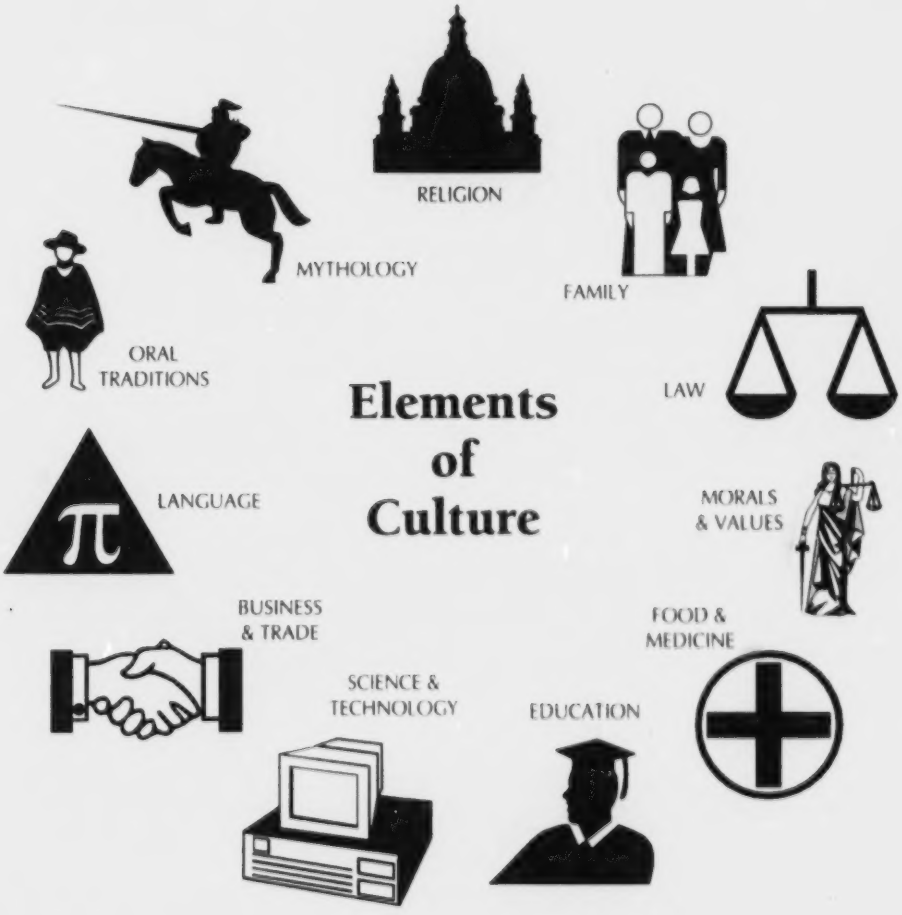
We need to create an environment in and out of the schoolroom in which logical disagreement and compassionate tolerance are not mutually exclusive. If we expect everyone to be just like ourselves, we're setting ourselves up for a pretty lonely and boring trip through this world. The strength of human society is its ever-present—though sometimes dormant—ability to accept and adapt to difference, *not* in its ability to coerce conformity. Diversity—not our similarities—makes us such an outstanding species. It is our differences that push us to creatively design a better world for all humanity.

Chapter 1

Some Definitions

(or, What We'll Be Talking About)



Culture consists of the abstract values, beliefs, perceptions of the world, shared by the members of a society. Culture is learned.

—Sir Edward Burnett Taylor

What Is Culture?

If students are going to spend time discovering their own cultural identities, they must first come up with a workable definition of what a culture is. According to anthropologists, all cultures share some basic characteristics:

Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A culture exists within a society with which it shares ideas, values, and standards of behavior. A culture may contain one or more subcultures that share some basic cultural assumptions but also have important differences from the main culture and from one another.
2. All culture is learned.
3. Every culture uses symbols to communicate values, morals, and fundamental truths.
4. All individuals integrate all the categories of their cultures to formulate their individual identities.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss these characteristics with your students. It is vital to explore them fully, because students must understand the abstract nature of cultural values to understand how the elements of each culture work. You may choose to discuss the following questions as a group, then have students respond individually to them in their scrapbooks. Be sure students save their responses to compare with their responses in later chapters.

1. What do these characteristics mean in your own words?
2. What examples are there of these ideas?
3. Do you agree that these characteristics are valid? Which characteristics or parts are valid and which are not? Why?
4. From your discussion, create in your own words a working definition of culture that reflects what you discovered. (The class's definition may differ from individual definitions.)

Cultural Needs

Anthropologist C. B. Makinoski has defined three basic categories of cultural needs, problems for which every culture finds some form of solution:

1. Biological: division of labor regarding gathering food and other necessities, and rules about marriage and child raising
2. Instrumental: social structure, laws, morals and ethics, and education
3. Integration: the intertwining categories of religion, history, and mythology

Discussion and Reflection

Divide your class into groups of three or four. Have them discuss Makinoski's categories (you may have to circulate to help them get on the right track), taking notes in their scrapbooks. They will respond to the following questions in their smaller groups, then share their ideas and discuss them as a class.

1. What do you think Makinoski's criteria for categorizing were? In other words, why did he put marriage and child raising in the biological category and not in the instrumental? Based on your discussion, create a definition for each category that embraces those criteria. You may start with, "A biological need is a need that . . . "
2. What changes would you make to the classifications? Which items would you move from one category to another and why?
3. What additions would you make to each category?
4. What new categories, if any, would you add? What types of problems would you include under your new categories? If you would not add categories, discuss why you think Makinoski's classification covers all possibilities.

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Give students time to reflect on what they learned in their scrapbooks. Remind them that they may use forms of expression other than verbal to reflect.

Culture versus Society

The meanings of *society* and *culture* can be easily confused, and it is important that your students understand the sometimes subtle differences between the two. A society is the overarching structure that creates roles, rules, and guidelines *to make that society work*. For example, it establishes a government, defines what a crime is and creates penalties for those who commit crimes, and establishes laws for its own benefit. Culture creates the social institutions *through which we self-identify*. It is revealed through and embraces religion, morals, and values; oral and other literary traditions; language; rituals surrounding food, marriage, birth, and death; role of family; art; attitudes toward business and trade, government, law, education, and science and technology.

That is true culture which helps us to work for the social betterment of all.

—Henry Ward Beecher

For example, ants and bees have societies; they don't have cultures. Individual ants or bees fulfill roles within their colonies or hives that ensure the survival of that group. They do not have religion, create art, transact business, or do any of the other things that define a culture. Their societies differ from those of humans in that their roles are genetically imposed, that is, they are born into their roles and don't have a choice. While human societies are created, they impose roles usually with the goal of ensuring survival. A society may contain members of more than one culture, whereas a culture does not usually contain members of more than one society. Problems may arise when a society develops its rules according to cultural beliefs and imposes those rules on those within other cultures.

Within cultures, there are two types of associations. Involuntary associations are those in which members identify with a group into which they are born. A family is a good example, since we have no control over what family we are born into. Voluntary associations are those we make by choice, such as a club or church. These two types are not mutually exclusive,

and they may change with circumstances. For example, a person may attend a religious service when he is a child because his family requires it, which makes it an involuntary association. As an adult, however, that same person chooses whether to continue the practice, so it becomes a voluntary association. If a person joins a gang because she strongly identifies with that gang, it is voluntary; if the gang forces her to join to ensure her survival, it may be involuntary. Students need to understand the power of making voluntary associations in order to create self-identities that embrace their values rather than those that may have been imposed on them.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the definitions of *society, culture,* and *voluntary* and *involuntary associations* with your students. As a class, come up with your own examples and illustrations for each. Remind students to take notes in their scrapbooks. Give students personal reflective time to develop examples and illustrations for each. Then divide the class into small groups and have them create a cultural artifact—a song, a story, a piece of art—that reflects or illustrates what they have learned.

Culture versus Ethnicity

Ethnicity, culture, and geography all intersect in ways that are difficult to pin down. When we find connections between our cultures and our ethnic backgrounds, it is easy to want to equate the two. However, culture is not always based on ethnicity. Ethnicity is only about shared blood, but shared blood doesn't necessarily mean similar cultures. One helpful way to think about the relationship between ethnicity and culture is that ethnicity is an unchanging part of who you are, your physical being, whereas culture is always changing.

The following two situations provide examples of the different ways in which geography, ethnicity or race, and culture interact. I am Irish and a native of Tucson, Arizona. My friend

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with whom I teach is Hispanic and a Tucson native. Even though he and I are of different ethnic backgrounds, our cultural outlooks and values are very similar because we were raised in the cultural milieu of Tucson. We had similar educational backgrounds and were exposed to similar religious teachings; our views of authority, family, and morals and values are similar. There is a remarkable similarity between the culture of Ireland and the culture of northern Spain—separated by 1500 miles of geography—even though there has been very little contact between the two since their separation some time around the first century C.E. The similarity exists because there are Celts in both places, and both cultures adopted many Celtic beliefs.

Discussion and Reflection

After a brief discussion on the differences between culture and ethnicity, have students come up with examples on their own. They will include these examples in their scrapbooks. You may give them the following questions if they have difficulty starting:

1. What cultural values do you share with others of the same ethnic background as you? What cultural values do you not share?
2. What values have you adopted because of where you live, that is, your community or country?

What Is Multiculturalism?

Any society that contains more than one culture is multicultural. If you live in a multicultural society, it is important that you be familiar with all the cultures in the society if you want to understand the society that you live in. You can't understand a multicultural society by knowing your culture alone.

Instruct students to look back over the definitions of culture and cultural characteristics that they developed at the beginning of this chapter. If they look at their notes about culture,

they should be able to develop a definition of *multiculturalism*. Their definitions should include something about different groups with the same society finding different ways to meet the same needs.

Discussion and Reflection

As a class, brainstorm a list of societies from history. Students should list the societies in their scrapbooks and take notes on any discussion that occurs after the brainstorming session. Then have students choose the ones that they think were *not* multicultural, that is, societies that governed only people within one culture. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group select one society from the list. They will do whatever research is necessary to see if the society was in fact monocultural. They will find an interesting way to share their findings with the class.

No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive.

—Mahatma Gandhi

A Brief Historical Perspective

Multiculturalism is not new to the world. Throughout recorded history people and nations have come into contact with different cultural groups and handled the interactions in a variety of ways. Often, the presence of multiple cultures in one society is turned into an "either/or" situation, in which the dominant culture assumes that the others should become secondary. Framing the problem as an either/or situation assumes that there are no other ways to resolve the "problem" presented by multiculturalism. In fact, however, as some of the following historical perspectives will show, societies with multiple cultures have occasionally succeeded by integrating all the cultures into a mass culture that all the members of the society can identify with, while simultaneously preserving each distinct cultural group. This solution allows members of distinct cultural groups to maintain their personal identities. More importantly to the society, however, it also allows for cross-cultural communication within the society, which results in a greater pool

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of knowledge, information, and skills that can lead to more effective approaches to solving problems and more richer life experiences.

Rome

One of the myths of our age is that the Roman Empire was intolerant of non-Roman peoples. By ancient standards and by some modern ones, the empire was extremely tolerant. It would have been impossible to hold together an empire that encircled the Mediterranean Sea for four hundred years unless Rome embraced multiculturalism to some extent. If the empire had forced its conquered peoples to give up their cultural identities, keeping them satisfied would have been much harder.

Culture without natural human goodness has an extremely disconcerting effect. There is something weird and terrifying about it.

—John Cowper Powys

By the first century, the empire had granted Roman citizenship to non-Italian and non-Latin peoples. In Acts 22, the writer recounts that Paul, moments before being lashed, asked a centurion, "Can you legally flog a man who is a Roman citizen, and moreover has not been found guilty?" When the centurion heard this, he reported it to the commander. "What do you mean to do?" the centurion asked his boss. "This man is a Roman citizen." The commander came to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes," Paul replied. The commander rejoined, "It cost me a large sum to acquire this citizenship." Paul said, "But it is mine by birth." Paul was Hebrew, but he was a citizen of Rome because he was born there. In most of the ancient world—and, for that matter, in much of the modern world—the privileges of citizenship are reserved for those of the same ethnicity as the dominant culture.

Instead of trying to erase them, Romans were often fascinated by other cultures, in particular their religions. Large portions of the Roman legions converted to the Persian religion of Mithraism during the first century. In the fourth century they would similarly convert to Christianity. Both were originally alien religions to the Roman people and to Rome.

Discussion and Reflection

Have students find out more about Rome and its treatment of non-Roman peoples. You may want them to respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks as they work:

1. How did the Roman Empire last for such a long time? How many cultures did the society incorporate into its own?
2. Why did the Roman Empire grant citizenship to foreigners? Why did the empire incorporate foreign ideas? How does this relate to the culture of the Roman Empire?
3. How did the incorporation of other cultures' ideas and values contribute to the success of the empire? How did it detract from the success?
4. Why did the Roman Empire fall?

Nazi Germany

If Rome provides an example of a society that successfully incorporated multiple cultures, Nazi Germany provides the opposite example. Germany had always been a multiethnic, multicultural society, with ethnicities and cultures that included Slavic and French. The society drew heavily on the various cultural traditions for its government, art, literature, and so on. But the Third Reich created a myth of a "monocultural" society—a society based on the idea of a "superior," pure ethnic group, the Aryan nation. In addition to costing the Jewish people living in Germany their homes, the Nazis' attempt to extinguish these ethnic groups and their cultural traditions cost the Germans some of their best minds in the arts, sciences, and the military—when you don't value others, you don't allow them to make contributions. Many great German thinkers were forced to leave Germany because they didn't sympathize with the new culture.

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Discussion and Reflection

Have students individually research some of the respected people who were killed or interned in concentration camps while the Third Reich was in power. Then have them find out about at least two other societies who were intolerant of other ethnic groups or cultures. You may choose the group and historic period or have them choose it. You might have them respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks as they work:

1. How does it change how we treat other people when we think that our culture is the only one with value? How does the Third Reich exemplify this phenomenon? How do the other cultures you researched exemplify it?
2. How do people come to the conclusion that their culture is the only valuable one?
3. Why did these societies fall? In what ways did their monocultural attitudes bring about their demise?
4. Do you think that the American idea of the "melting pot" is a worthy goal, or could it be seen as an attempt to create one culture where there really are several?

Medieval England

The conquest of England by William the Conqueror of Normandy was a cultural clash that provides an excellent example of the central role that language plays in preserving or destroying a culture. France's lack of tolerance for English culture resulted in the loss of the English language; at the same time, however, the subversive perseverance of the Anglo-Saxons resulted in the creation of a new language that combined English and French.

When William the Conqueror claimed the English throne in 1066, he took control of a nation that was Germanic, or Anglo-Saxon, in the southern and central regions, Celtic in the extreme west, and Scandinavian in parts of the north and east.

As part of assuming control of this vast country, William gave many privileges to the French citizens of England. Most importantly, he made French the official language of the court.

When William I mandated the use of French, the language that people were speaking throughout England—now known as Old English—began to die out from lack of use. People who spoke Old English did something unique, however. They learned French words—as they were required by law to do—and put them into English sentence structures. ("Spanglish" in the southwestern United States is a similar phenomenon.) For example, "Let's rendezvous at the cafe," uses two French words in an English sentence structure: "meet" could be substituted for "rendezvous" and "eatery" could be substituted for "cafe" without changing the meaning of the sentence. Eventually, a new form of English developed—now called Middle English—that combined French and Old English. In this way, the Anglo-Saxons of England kept their language—and therefore their culture—alive.

For the world is not to be narrowed 'til it will go into the understanding but the understanding is to be expanded and opened 'til it can take in the image of the world.
—Francis Bacon

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss in general terms the ties between a culture and a language. Then move into the example given here or any other examples you may find that concern loss of language and a resultant loss of culture.

1. In what ways is a culture dependent on its language for survival? How did the Anglo-Saxon culture change—that is, what elements were lost—because part of the Anglo-Saxon language was lost?
2. What are some examples of modern languages that combine more than one language?
3. How does this process change the language? Are original meanings of words preserved?

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The Southwest

The United States provides many examples of how cultures change when they come into contact with one another. The prime example is in the American Southwest, which arguably remains the most actively multicultural part of the country today.

Even the name of the modern city of Tucson, Arizona, indicates its multicultural history. *Toixon* was the Spanish pronunciation of the Tohono O'odam *schookson* or *stjuksom*, which translates as "at the foot of the black hill or mountain." The name Toixon was eventually Anglicized to *Tucson*.

Inevitably, the culture within which we live shapes and limits our imaginations.

—Margaret Mead

The area around Tucson had been a Tohono O'odam and Tineh (Apache) settlement as early as the tenth century. Spanish missionaries moved into the region at the end of the seventeenth century, notably under Padre Eusebio Kino's mission building sweep of the Sonoran Desert. Anglo settlers began to arrive in the area during the second half of the nineteenth century, when the railroad made its way through the Southwest. Some Anglos resented the presence of a population of "locals"—that is, the Hispanics and the native peoples—and most of them left. Those who stayed were part of a very diverse group who would become the founders of the modern city of Tucson. Their last names show the diversity of the town's population: Oury, Ochoa, Hayden, Aquirre, Stevens, Pacheco, Meyer, Ronstadt, Mowry, to name a few. These people would intermarry and mix their fortunes, forming a multicultural group that was respectful of one another's cultural elements. This respect grew out of the need for survival: the harsh demands of the desert environment, the small population, and the settlement's relative isolation made differences in language, religion, and other practices seem inconsequential. Also, those who had been in the desert longer had developed ways of coping that had become part of their culture; the newcomers found it imperative to adopt those practices.

Discussion and Reflection

Divide your class into groups of four or five. If you have an ethnically or culturally diverse class, be sure to include students from different backgrounds in each group. Have them discuss the connection between harsh living conditions and respect for cultures other than their own. You may want to have them discuss what they think happens among diverse groups when living conditions are harsh, then tell them about the preceding example. Finally, have them respond to the following questions. They will take notes and answer the questions in their scrapbooks as they discuss.

1. How is the cultural history of the area where you live similar to or different from that of the Southwest?
2. What were the factors that contributed to the cross-cultural interactions in the Southwest? Could any of these factors be used today to encourage cross-cultural communication?

What Is Cultural Absolutism?

Cultural absolutism is the idea that the values, beliefs, goals, and other ideas of one particular culture are the only "right" ones and contain the only truths. Cultural absolutism is also often called *bigotry*. When an entire culture invokes cultural absolutism, it is often called *ethnocentrism*.

Ethnocentrism—the belief that my culture and its values are the best in the world—makes it difficult for me to examine other cultures in any objective way. I will always judge them by comparing them to my own. Ethnocentrism is a common human affliction; after all, we often can't help but look through our own eyes. Admitting our own ethnocentrism is just as hard as trying to look through someone else's eyes: it's like admitting that our own eyes may be defective. But if we understand the defect, then we can start to correct it.

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Student Project

Look carefully at your notes from the last four discussions (Rome, Nazi Germany, Medieval England, and the United States). Explore what you have learned about culture in general through these activities. How have your perspectives of what culture is changed? What new elements have you considered that you never thought about before? Next, explore what you have learned about your own culture. In what ways do you identify with your culture? What values does your culture embrace? Finally, think about what you have learned about yourself. What self-identity does your culture give you? What values do you embrace? What about your culture have the discussions called into question?

Choose a project to share what you have learned with your class. It may be a song, a play, a mural, a diorama, an essay—be creative and use your talents well. Enlist your classmates' help if you need it.

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For example, if I say about culture A, "Boy, all their problems would be solved if they just had a free market economy," then I am assuming that culture A needs something that my culture has in order to be happy. But their happiness may be based on a cultural value that I don't have or can't understand. Our values may work for us and make us happy, but that is no reason to assume that they will make others happy. In fact, if I were more open, I might find something in culture A from which I would benefit.

Cultural absolutism can provide extreme pride, identity, and self-esteem, but it is a stagnant viewpoint and a dead end. Instead of fearing the new and the different, we need to value growth and adapt if we are to succeed as a species.

What Is Cultural Relativism?

Cultural relativism is the idea that the norms, values, beliefs, and goals of one culture are true for that culture only. A cultural relativist rejects the idea that any one culture knows the absolute truth.

Cultural relativism is a healthy antidote to cultural absolutism, but it has its own dangers. One danger with cultural relativism is that it makes it easy to conclude that, since every culture has its own values and morals, there really are no valid values at all. But if our identity is derived from our culture, and if a large part of our culture is its morals and values, then when we devalue moral codes we lose part of our culture—and part of our identity. Instead of devaluing all moral codes because there are multiple codes, we should spend our energy discovering and evaluating our *own* personal morals and values and how our personal codes relate to the moral codes of our families and culture. This way, we not only develop a functional code that works for ourselves, we identify more strongly with our families and the rest of our cultures, without sacrificing our respect for other cultures.

I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than on truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is . . . a source of hope. It means we don't have to continue this way if we don't like it.

—Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Student Project

Respond to the following questions in your scrapbook.

1. What is the general purpose of junior, middle, and high school education?
2. What subjects do you think should be taught?
3. Do you think information about a variety of cultures should be taught in school? Why or why not?
4. How does your answer to question 3 fit with your answers to questions 1 and 2?

Look carefully at your answers to these questions. Choose an event from the history of your community. Then, based on the opinions reflected in the answer to the questions, write two or three lesson plans to teach a fifth-grade class about that event. If you think a variety of cultures should not be included in education, then your lesson plans will reflect the viewpoint of the dominant culture. If you think variety is necessary, then your plans will reflect several viewpoints. If possible, arrange with a fifth-grade teacher to teach that class your lessons.

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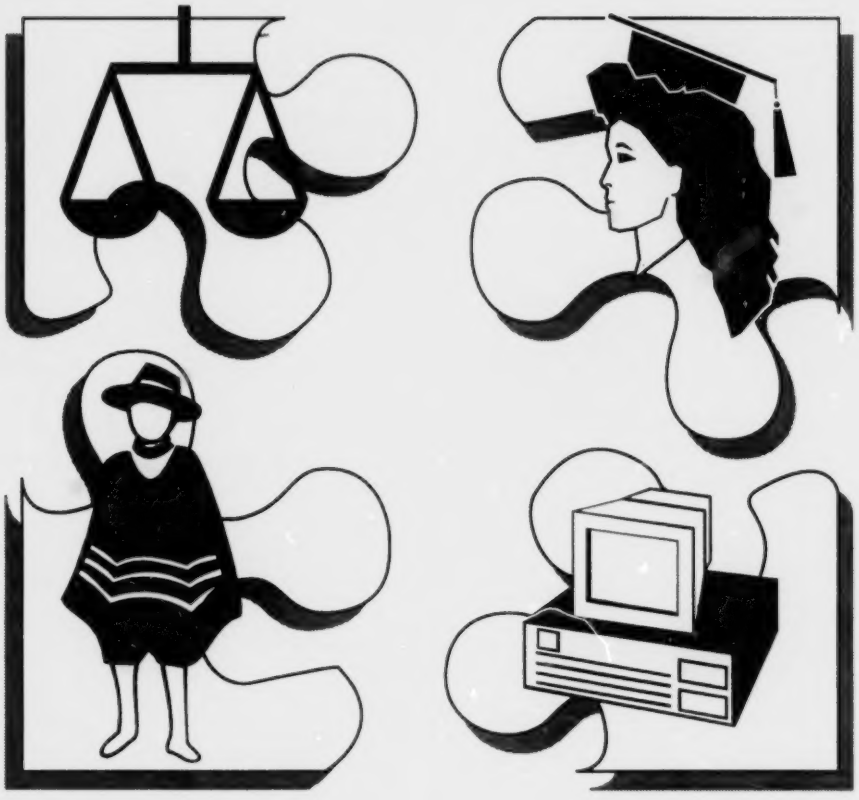
Chapter 2

Culture, Identity, and You



Self-awareness presupposes awareness of others. It is this awareness of others that helps us figure out our cultural identities, which in turn helps us form our personal identities.

—Georg Fredrick Hegal

Our cultures are part of who we are as individuals, as well as part of how we identify ourselves as members of larger groups. When I say *I, me,* or my name, what does that mean? What am I referring to? These are questions that we all ask, and our cultures play a role in our answers. We can all find clues to our own cultures by examining how we feel—and how our families feel—about each slice of the cultural pie. And once we understand our own culture, we are a giant step closer to understanding our neighbors who have different cultures.

To help students continue to explore their individual cultures, they will gather in small diverse groups and brainstorm lists of cultural elements. Together, they will discuss possible connections among the elements and draw lines to illustrate those connections. For example, they may choose to draw a line between religion and morals. Encourage the groups to reach a consensus, that is, have everyone in the group agree, rather than relying on a simple majority.

When they have finished making connections and discussing them, they will work individually to create illustrated mindscapes based on their notes and the lists.

Religion

Religion is one of the most controversial topics that can be brought up in a school, but that is no reason to avoid it, especially since it is such an important part of all cultures. The objective of this unit is for students to find out what religion is, how distinct cultures interpret it differently, and the effects those different interpretations have on individuals in the cultures.

The practice of religion, along with art, is one of the oldest known human activities. Neanderthal people—ancestors of modern humans who lived 80,000 to 25,000 years ago—have been found buried with objects, including both utilitarian objects and stone figurines. The details of the Neanderthals' beliefs and the significance of these particular objects were buried with them, but at least we know that humans had some kind of belief system that long ago that would cause them to

Student Project

The parts of culture are not fixed elements. You may have elements in your culture, such as a coming of age ritual, that your friends don't have in theirs. Neither are they separable from one another or from a complete understanding of what culture is. For example, if religious faith is very important in your friend's culture, you cannot understand her culture unless you consider that element and how it informs other aspects of her culture. As you do the following activity, be sure you take notes in your scrapbook so you can create the final product.

With several classmates, brainstorm a list of all the aspects of culture you can think of. Take about fifteen minutes. Next, discuss the different pieces of a culture that may be related to others. Draw lines for each connection. For example, you may think that language and oral traditions are closely connected. Religion and morals may be related. To decide whether or not there are connections, ask yourselves questions such as, "Are there morals involved in how people do business and trade?" If the answer is yes, you would draw a line connecting the two elements. Elements may have several connections to other elements.

On your own, create an illustrated mindscape of what you think are the five most important cultural elements. In the center of your mindscape, write *culture* or draw a picture that represents culture. Then put the five most important elements around that center, and illustrate or list the cultural elements that you think fall under those five. Save the mindscape so you can refer to it to see how your attitudes change.

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attach meaning to burial rituals, suggesting that they believed in an afterlife.

Modern humankind has a tremendous variety of religious beliefs. There are some similarities and great differences among the world's religions, but one aspect remains virtually constant: it is often the most important identity we have—one of the first ways we answer the question, "Who are you?"

Religion is also one of the most unchanging aspects of culture. People may change sects or denominations within one religion, but switching to another religion entirely is pretty rare. A religion usually includes beliefs about prayer, life after death, deities, scriptures, rituals, rites, a cosmic order that cannot be known by humans, and the way this cosmic order shows up in everyday human life.

Discussion and Reflection

Divide students into groups of three or four. Have them discuss the role religion plays in culture. They should draw on their own experiences to help them through this discussion. Then have them do the following activity.

Step 1: In most of the world's religions, there are sacred days that fall around the winter and summer solstices (December 21 and June 21) and the spring and fall equinoxes (March 21 and September 21). Does your family celebrate any holidays around these dates? In your scrapbook, write down what each holiday is, its religious significance, and the ways your family celebrates it.

Step 2: Research the following holidays to find out which religions they came from and how they relate to an equinox or solstice. Add to the list any other holidays that are celebrated during these times.

Christmas
Day of the Dead
Eaoster
Easter
Halloween
Midsummer's Night
Passover
Saturnalia
Thanksgiving
Yom Kippur

Step 3: Work in small groups to compare what you found out about your families' holidays. Be sure to continue to take notes in your scrapbook. Start with the following questions, but be sure to satisfy your own curiosity.

- Are any of the holidays the same?
- What holidays that differ are celebrated on or near the same day?
- Does anyone in your small group celebrate a holiday on the list? Which holidays?
- Are there any holidays on the research list that no one in your group celebrates? Which ones?
- What similarities exist between those holidays and the ones that you or your classmates celebrate? Are there similar themes or are they celebrated at the same time?

Morals and Values

Good and bad
I defined these terms,
Quite clear, no doubt, somehow.
But I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now.

—Bob Dylan
My Back Pages

A fundamental characteristic of any culture is that its members share a basic system of norms and values that is expressed both implicitly and explicitly. Although there are always some people within a culture who disagree with the dominant group's system of values and who will usually form a subgroup—or subculture—with a different set of values, the important point is that as human beings, we cannot seem to be without a system of values; if we don't like the system being offered, we tend to make a new one.

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Student Project

Write down in your scrapbook what you think each of the following words means. Then look up the terms in a dictionary or encyclopedia.

deity	rite
demon	ritual
god	sacred
goddess	sacrifice
prayer	scripture

Are your definitions different from the dictionary's? How? These differences don't necessarily mean that you were wrong. Instead, the differences might provide you with clues to your cultural ideas about religion. List some of these ideas in your scrapbook.

Ask members of your family how they would define the same terms. Write down their answers in your scrapbook.

Separate into groups of three or four. Group members take turns sharing their definitions and those of their families. Do group members have similar definitions for any of the words? Are any of the family responses similar? Do any students have definitions similar to those of any other student's family?

As a group, try to find reasons for similarities or differences. Do any group members or families practice the same religion? What could be some other reasons for similarities or differences?

Choose one member of your group to report to the class what your group discovered. Come up with an interesting project, such as a poem, rap, song, or mural, that your representative can use to convey what you learned.

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Because we each have our own set of cultural values and morals that we believe to be right (otherwise, why would we believe them?), it's easy to assume that one set of values must always be "right" and the others "wrong." But when you're discussing cultures with your students and studying how various cultures develop, it's important to remind them that just because different cultural groups have different sets of values, it does not mean that the systems are not right or valid.

Instead of focusing on the rightness or wrongness of a set of values, look at the goal of each value instead of the value itself. As students look at different sets of values around the country and around the world, help them notice that the systems are all different means toward the same end—some kind of good for the group and its society.

The quantum world has demolished the concept of the unconnected individual.

—Margaret Wheatley

For example, the same problem might be approached in different ways by someone from the United States and someone from Japan. After working with the same company for fifteen years, an employee is offered a position with a competitor who promises a 25 percent increase in salary, the same level of job security, and a higher position within the company. For the American, the decision is not too difficult—take the new job. For the Japanese worker, factors such as company loyalty are much more important and the decision is therefore much harder. Even though the two workers might make different decisions, they both would believe they had done the right thing. The American honors individualism and therefore chooses based on what is best for her as an individual. The Japanese believes loyalty is a greater good than individualism.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students the role morals and values play in their lives. Guide them to see how our cultures help us develop our morals and values. A good way to represent a person's (or a culture's) system of values is with a wagon wheel diagram: the hub of the wheel represents the person's general definition of good (for example, loyalty for the Japanese worker and individual success for the

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American), and each spoke represents individual values or morals that somehow achieve the central good. On pages 35, 36, and 37 are examples of value wheels for three very different historical figures: Aristotle, Epicurus, and Karl Marx. You may want to copy these wheels and give them to your students for their scrapbooks.

Superstitions

Superstitions are beliefs and practices that people develop to explain things that they cannot explain naturally. All cultural groups have their own superstitions that are passed down through families from one generation to another. Superstition has its roots in ancient times, when people believed that the world was inhabited by supernatural beings and only a select number of people had the power and knowledge to manipulate these beings. In some cultures, the superstitions are stronger than the religious beliefs.

Discussion and Reflection

Have students ask their parents and other immediate family members about family superstitions. They will list them in their scrapbooks. Are the superstitions treated seriously or used for entertainment value? They will choose one or two superstitions that are common around their homes and find out how the superstitions originated. In small, in-class groups, they will compare their family superstitions. Do their families have the same superstitions? They will conclude by responding to the following questions in their scrapbooks.

1. How do your family superstitions fit into your religion? Are they consistent or contradictory?
2. Do the superstitions reflect any of the values in your value wheel?

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Aristotle

Figure 2-1. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) was one of the great thinkers of Western civilization. One of his great quests was to pin down the definition of "good."

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Epicurus

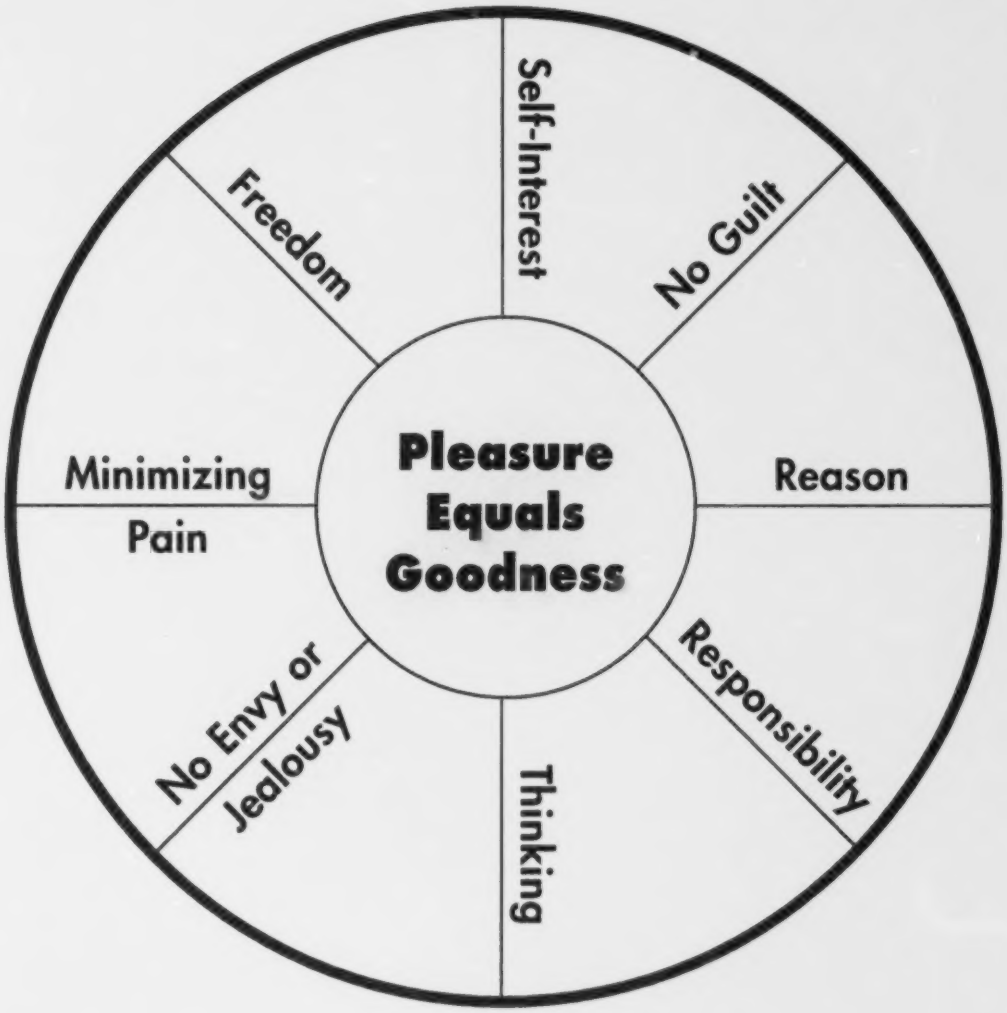

Figure 2-2. Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.) was the founder of a school of thought known today as *hedonism*. He defined "good" as pleasure and rational self-interest. One of his well-known remarks is, "Eat, drink, and be merry. Tomorrow, you may die."

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Karl Marx

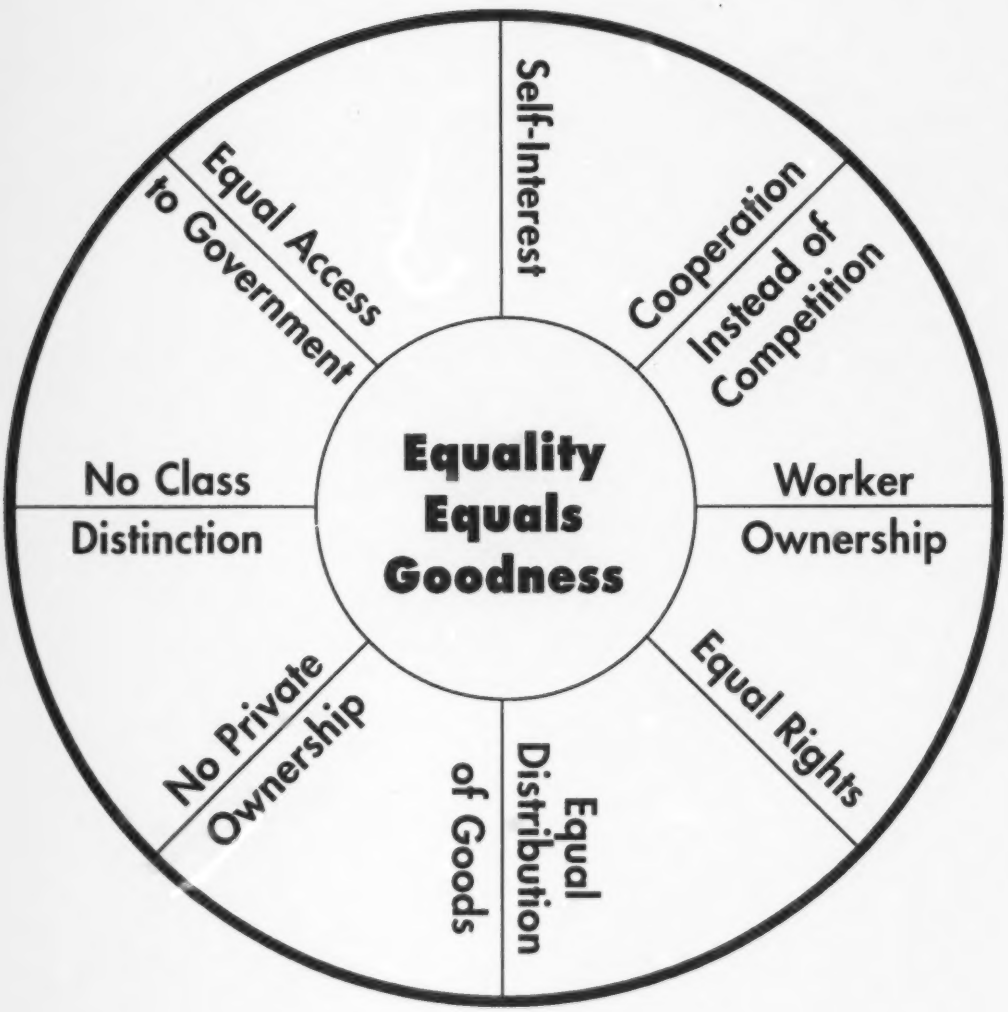

Figure 2-3. Karl Marx (C.E. 1818–1883) was the father of modern communism. He authored, with Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, and also wrote a number of economic analyses, including *Das Kapital*.

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Student Project

The primary reason for this exercise is to discover your own personal values, which means that there are absolutely no wrong answers. Be sure to put down what you truly believe, not what you think your friends or parents would want to hear.

Draw your own blank value wheel in your scrapbook—this wheel will be a kind of self-portrait. Label the hub of the wheel *good.* List along the spokes various things you think are morally good.

Spend time brainstorming what makes these things good, and list your ideas in the hub of the wheel. Write your name along the circumference of the wheel—your self-portrait is complete.

Draw two more blank value wheels, and ask a parent or other family member to fill one in and a close friend to fill in the other. Compare these value wheels to yours. How are they similar and how are they different? Discuss the three different wheels with your friend and family. What do they tell you about yourself, your parents or other relatives, and your friends?

Write a short essay comparing the three value wheels. What can you conclude from the differences and similarities? What did you learn about yourself, family, and friends?

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3. **Do you think superstitions are stupid? Why? Would you intentionally break a mirror, or live on the thirteenth floor in room 1313 on street 666, or smash a cross?**
4. **What do you think your answers to these questions tell you about yourself and your culture?**

Foods

All ethnic groups have foods that are unique to their culture. A group's diet developed from what was available in the geographical region in which the people originated. People usually adapt their diet based on what becomes available, but there are certain foods that are associated with certain groups. Different cuisines and ways of preparing foods usually developed as a solution to the problem of how to prevent food from spoiling. Societies that didn't develop a way to preserve and store food would be hard-pressed to survive a time of famine. The foods became so entrenched in the cultures, however, that even though those methods of preservation are no longer necessary, the people still prepare foods in that way.

One thousand years ago in Europe the foods that were most readily available were grains and some meat. Depending on where in Europe you lived, your diet might consist of breads, vegetable and meat soups, rancid meats, and spoiled milk. The people of northern Europe could preserve meat by freezing it. Animals were slaughtered in the mid to late fall so the meat could be frozen during the winter. But in the warmer climate of central Europe, pickling was the easiest way to preserve foods that might spoil. Germans use vinegar and honey or sugar to prepare meats and vegetables, which produces a sweet and sour taste, as in sauerkraut. In southern Europe, where it was warmer and food would spoil even faster, people needed a different solution to the problem of food preservation. Some spices, such as salt and pepper, preserve food as well as cover up the bad taste of rancid foods. Luckily, the main trade routes to Asia Minor, India, and China were nearby, so spices from those countries became an essential part of the diets of people

Children, having first learned about their own families or neighborhoods or communities, are fascinated with the diversity to be found within the sameness of a given function. Through such study they should be able to recognize family, neighborhood, and community wherever it exists, and in populations of animals other than humans as well.

—Dorothy D. Hoffman
Linking through Diversity

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in southern Europe. Spices eventually became so valuable to these cultures that Cristóbal Colón was able to convince Spain's Queen Isabella to finance an expensive expedition to find a new trade route to India to get them. Instead of finding his way to India, however, he happened upon the Americas, changing the course of history.

Weaving and sewing show how small fragile threads woven together make a strong cloth, how tiny stitches have power to hold fast the disparate pieces of a patchwork quilt. So too in our daily relationships, we can give our attention to mending our torn connections and binding the unraveling fabric of our communities . . . We also experience how our tiny stitches make a difference in the world.

—Source unknown

Cultures change with the times, and so do the foods that people eat. When the Europeans learned how to get to the Americas, they were introduced to new foods that would change their diets. The best example is the potato, which is indigenous to the Americas. Europeans started to grow the potato, and it became such a staple that when a crop failed—as it did in Ireland in the 1840s—widespread famine and death resulted.

Families often have traditions that use food as medicines for colds, good health, and longevity. For example, in my own Scottish family, almost all foods are made from some form of oatmeal. My maternal grandfather, who was born in Scotland, always told me that long life and good health depended on a daily breakfast of oatmeal. He also said that the best cure for illness is to have a breakfast of hot oatmeal; drink hot tea with cream, honey, and a shot of Scotch whisky; and sit in a warm place and sweat out the sickness. My grandfather claimed that this remedy worked better than doctors' prescriptions, and he lived into his mid-eighties.

Along with medicinal uses, most cultures assign religious significance to food. Orthodox Jews and Muslims are forbidden to eat pork because it is considered to be an unclean meat. Hindus are prohibited from eating beef, because they believe that cows are reincarnated humans and are therefore sacred. A practicing Roman Catholic may not eat red meat on Fridays during Lent, believing Friday to be the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Some religions, including Jainism in India, demand vegetarianism, while other religions only recommend it.

Student Project

Interview family members about traditional foods and home remedies. Find out what they are, where they came from, what their ingredients are, whether they have changed in the last three or four generations (does your dad make the dish differently than his grandmother did?). Record the interviews in your scrapbook. If your family doesn't have any traditional dishes, research the traditional foods and medicines of your culture and share your discoveries with your family.

On another day, or for a class party, bring a food that is traditional to your culture—or one that is a family favorite—and give a presentation to the class about the history, health effects, and religious significance of the dish.

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Symbols

A symbol is somewhat like a photograph—it says in one glance what might take thousands of words to express. A symbol can be as simple as a stick figure of a woman or a man on a restroom door, or it can be as complicated as a flag. A cultural symbol, specifically, is something that we see and identify with immediately. We see this symbol and our immediate reaction is, "That's my group. I belong there."

Sometimes a group deliberately uses a culture's symbol to mean something different from what was originally intended. For example, the Nazis forced Jewish people to wear cloth badges of the Star of David, an ancient symbol of Judaism and faith, to symbolize control over the Jewish people. The Nazis also persecuted gay men and women, and in the concentration camps made them wear badges of pink triangles. The gay subculture adopted the pink triangle as a symbolic declaration of their refusal to remain powerless, and now use it—upside down—as a positive symbol of being gay.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss symbols with your students. Use these and other examples to be sure they understand the importance each culture attaches to its symbols.

Art

Creating art is one of the oldest human activities. In different cultures at different times, art has had many different functions. It is the visual representation of our values and our hopes. Art can provide the key to another existence, as in religious art that depicts the faces of deities or the appearance of the next world; it can represent an ideal, as Hellenistic Greek art represented the ideal of beauty; it can portray the world "as it is," as in some of the art of the Renaissance; it may represent an emotion, as some forms of modern art do; or it may encompass any combination of the above.

Student Project

Look for symbols in your house, other family members' houses, or in your neighborhood. Keep a list of any that you find and ask your family to tell you what they mean, if you don't know already. Draw examples of these symbols in your scrapbook.

On another day, work in small classroom groups to compare your list of symbols with those of your classmates. Are any of the symbols the same? Are the meanings the same? Are there similar symbols with different meanings? In your scrapbook, take notes about your group's symbols and their meanings.

Based on what you have learned about symbols, choose the symbol that means the most to you or represents a strong belief. Is it a religious symbol? A patriotic one? Or is it something that is symbolic to you alone? In your scrapbook, draw the symbol and write an explanation of what the elements mean to you and why they are important.

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Of course, art also includes drama, music, literature, movies, television, and any other form through which humans express their perspective or values about themselves and the outside world.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students how artistic expression reflects and defines cultural values. Have them take notes in their scrapbooks as you do so. You may want to bring in several works of art from a variety of cultures, or have them bring in works of art that are important to their families or within their cultures. Ask what the subject matter and style show about the cultures the artworks represent.

Have them respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks.

1. What kinds of movies and television shows do I like?
2. What kinds of stories do I like to read and hear?
3. What kinds of things do I put up on the wall in my room if I have a choice?

Why do they like the art they like? Do they like different art forms for similar reasons? Have them ask their parents and siblings the same questions about their preferences. How do the answers compare?

Divide students into small groups to compare what they have discovered. Is their artistic taste more in common with that of their friends or of their families? Is this true for all art forms or just for some? Discuss possible reasons for the similarities and differences.

Language

We dissect nature along the lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscope flux of impressions which has been organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic system in our minds.

—Benjamin Lee Worf
Science and Linguistics

Have students try to think of anything—an object or a thought—without using language. Can they? Our ideas, our values, oral traditions, laws, religion, and all other parts of a culture are expressed via language. We think in our language and in its grammatical patterns, which means there are at least as many ways of thinking about the world as there are languages. It also means that when a language becomes extinct, so does a way of thinking about the world.

On the surface, it seems as though words, no matter what language they're in, are just labels for objects and that all languages do the same basic thing using different sounds. If I am an English speaker learning to speak Spanish, one of the first things I might learn is that when I want to say "house," I say *casa* instead. Learning another language seems like a simple math problem, where *house* equals *casa*. If languages worked this way, then language would be culturally neutral, since we could simply substitute words for other words. But the way a particular language works is culturally dependent. Language is shaped by the culture that uses it, and the language, in turn, shapes the culture.

One example of the ways in which language is culturally dependent is how a language expresses ideas that are important to the specific culture. Often the words of one language cannot be easily translated into another language. In classical Greek there are three words for love: *philos*, *eros*, and *agape*. Philos is intellectual love, eros is sensual or romantic love (*erotic*

derives from it), and agape is divine love. In English, we have to determine the precise meaning of the word love by the content of the rest of the sentence. In the Russian language, one word, *kochevat'*, needs five English words to be accurately translated: "to live a nomadic life." The nomadic existence is common in the Russian Far East, which explains their need for an easy way to express that lifestyle. In the United States, by contrast, nomads or wanderers are rare.

Another way in which language is culturally dependent is through the use of metaphor and other figures of speech. A metaphor is a word or phrase that literally means one thing but is used to symbolize another. When we read or listen to a metaphorical story and understand only its literal meaning, we completely miss what the story means to the culture whose story it is. The story of the Trojan horse is an example of a cultural metaphor. If I receive a gift and a friend of mine says, "Be careful, it may be a Trojan horse," I would not take the phrase literally—that someone had given me either a wooden horse with a battalion of soldiers inside or a horse of Trojan ancestry; I would understand that my friend was warning me that the gift might not be a gift at all, but something dangerous instead. As with many elements of culture, language changes and adapts itself to a variety of circumstances. For example, "Spanglish" spoken in areas of the Southwest incorporates some words and syntax from English into the Spanish language.

The larger cultural importance of language is that it is so closely connected to cultural definitions and identity that destruction of a language can bring about the destruction of an entire culture. In the fifth century, as Britain changed hands from the Roman Empire to the Anglo-Saxons, a Saxon king named Hengist outlawed the use of Latin in all of Britain to cement the changing of the guard. The loss of the Latin language resulted in the loss—for about 150 years—of the Latin religion of the time, Christianity, which changed the cultural climate. The long-term repercussions of the absence of Latin from the cultural landscape of Britain is that Britain is now the only part of what used to be the Western Roman Empire that does not have a Latin-based language.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students why language is always present in cultures. Discuss some of the examples of the tie between language and culture. Encourage them to come up with examples of their own.

Oral Traditions and Stories

We all love to tell stories about ourselves, our family, friends, cultural group, and nation. Throughout human history people have told stories, and through most of time the stories have been shared orally instead of in writing, passed down from generation to generation. Storytellers and town criers have historically been responsible for sharing this information. Today, folk and ballad singers perform similar functions.

This oral tradition served not only to entertain but also to preserve and continue the most important cultural elements. Rules of behavior, morals, values, explanations, all were evident in the stories. In most cases, the stories were told in rhyme and meter to facilitate memory. (Think of how easy it is to remember nursery rhymes and other poems.) In cultures that depend on written rather than oral traditions, it is often difficult to appreciate the effectiveness of the oral tradition; we seem to think that the written word is more reliable or permanent than the spoken word. However, oral traditions often preserve a culture much more effectively than written traditions. If an entire group of people knows a metrical story, for example, the entire group has to die for that story and its message to die. If another group relies on a written manuscript, however, and does not memorize what is in it, then the accidental or purposeful destruction of that manuscript kills the message.

A classical example of the way in which cultural stories teach values is the ancient Greek story of Oedipus. In classical Greek culture, one of the most important values was "Know thyself." It was so important that it was inscribed above the entrance to the Temple at Delphi. Here is a short synopsis of the story of Oedipus.

Student Project

Research a story from your cultural background that uses metaphors or other figures of speech to make a point. Do you understand the metaphorical meaning of the story, or do you need to do additional research to make the metaphors clear?

In small classroom groups, share your stories. Ask your classmates what they think the story means. Do they get the metaphorical meaning or only the literal one?

In your scrapbook, write down the story and explain the metaphorical meanings. Share your findings with your class.

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The king and queen of Thebes, Laius and Jocasta, were told by a fortune-teller that they would give birth to a son who would grow up to kill his father and marry his mother. When Jocasta later gave birth to a son, they remembered the prophecy but couldn't bring themselves to kill the child. A servant took the boy away and tied him to a rock.

A shepherd from the faraway city of Corinth found the child and gave him to the king and queen of Corinth, who had no children and so raised Oedipus as if he were their natural born son. As Oedipus approached adulthood, he began hearing rumors that he would kill his father and marry his mother, which he assumed meant the king and queen of Corinth. To prevent such a horror, he left the city and decided to live in exile in Thebes.

On the road to Thebes, at a narrow crossing, he met a man who demanded that Oedipus go ahead of him. They got into a fight and Oedipus killed him. When he arrived in the city, he discovered that a sphinx had laid siege to the city and wouldn't allow anyone to enter unless they could answer a riddle. Oedipus answered the riddle, killed the sphinx, and was welcomed as a hero in the city. It was discovered that the king had been killed outside of town, and Oedipus—being the most heroic in the city—was given the queen for his bride.

Twenty years later, Oedipus found out that he had killed the king of Thebes, because the king was the man at the crossing in the road. Furthermore, Oedipus found out that the king was his father and that he had married his mother, Jocasta. As self-punishment, Oedipus poked his eyes out with a hot iron.

From the point of view of his culture, Oedipus did nothing wrong. In fact, his actions by themselves were heroic and virtuous: He was honorable in his imposition of self-exile, physically strong in defeating an enemy, and clever in solving the riddle of the sphinx. One cultural message of the story, however, is that even the most virtuous or heroic actions will lead to your destruction if you lack self-knowledge.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students the concept of oral traditions in general and the purposes they serve within a culture. Then discuss the oral traditions they have in their families.

Student Project

Think about the role oral tradition may play in your family. Jot down some ideas in your scrapbook.

Ask your parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles to share a story from the family roots. Write the story in your scrapbook and brainstorm a list of ideas about the values and morals it conveys and the metaphors it uses.

Retell the story to one or more friends and write down their interpretations of the story's moral. Do your closer friends interpret the story more like you do? What might that mean about the kinds of qualities we look for in close friends?

Tell the story to an adult you don't know as well and write down that person's responses.

Work in small groups to share your stories. Write down your classmates' responses to your story. Do you notice any cultural similarities among the people who had similar interpretations of the story? In terms of storytelling and oral traditions, what might be beneficial about having friends from a different cultural background than your own?

Take a few minutes to think about whether you accept the story's morals. If you do, add the value to your value wheel; if you don't accept the story's values, think about which of your own values conflict with the ones in the story. Be sure those values are on the wheel.

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Student Project

Write or tell a story that embodies and conveys all the basic principles on your value wheel. Remember how rhyme and meter make a story easier to remember? After you have written or told your story, revise it using rhyme and meter. Teach it to a family member.

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Gender Roles

All cultures assign different roles to men and boys and to women and girls. The roles vary from culture to culture, within subcultures, and in different time periods within one culture as they change to meet the changing needs of the society. They are usually such a basic part of our upbringing that we might not even know we are following prescribed roles. If you compare your life to the life of someone of the same gender in another culture (or in another historical period of your culture), your own cultural gender roles might become visible as you compare the different ways of living, playing, and working.

Cultures tend to have an ideal role for each gender to play, which changes a lot more slowly than the cultural reality, which often shifts quickly to respond to external changes in the structure of the society. For example, the Victorian world's ideal was for the father to serve as the source of authority and economic support and the mother to be solely responsible for the children. However, the reality among the wealthy was often that after the children were born the mother turned them over to a nanny so that she could pursue her own interests, and the father was not too concerned with doling out authority so long as the children were not an embarrassment to him.

Among the poor, the reality was usually that both the mother and father had to work outside the home in order to have any hope of providing a subsistence level of income. It was only among the rising middle class that these ideal gender roles were becoming rigidly defined.

Then came World War I. As nations mobilized for the war, most of the men joined the military. In a modern war, industry is as important as the military, and since most of the men were in the military it became necessary for the women to work in the factories. Once the war was over, most women returned to their prewar roles. Housewife and mother were still the ideal definitions of women's roles, but the reality of the war had started the process of role erosion. During World War II, women returned to the factories when the men went to war, but this time, many women didn't want to leave their jobs when

the men returned home. This post-war period constituted the beginning of the two-working-parent family. In the last twenty-five years, inflation and a declining standard of living in the United States have made it necessary for both men and women to work outside the home in order to maintain the same standard of living as their parents maintained with only one working.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss gender roles with your students. You may find that many students have clear and strong ideas about what gender roles exist or should exist. Others may tell you that there are no clearly defined gender roles in our society.

Marriage

Like family, marriage is one of the social and cultural institutions that is common to all humanity but has almost as many different meanings and practices as there are cultures. Some will say it is primarily a property arrangement; others define marriage as a way to guarantee biological ties and inheritances; and many cultural anthropologists call marriage a "contract in which a man and a woman establish a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to one another, and in which the woman involved is eligible to bear children."

Throughout most of history, marriage was considered too important to be left to the chancy choice of love. Marriage was considered a decision that affected the greater family and sometimes the nation, not just the husband and wife. Marriages were usually arranged by the families in order to encourage economic benefit, political alliances, or other forms of cooperation between families.

William Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* illustrates this attitude. Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet fall in love, but their families—age-old enemies—forbid them to marry. When they refuse to renounce their love, they come to a tragic end. In ancient Sumaria (3000–2000 B.C.E.), families arranged

Student Project

Gender roles are often reflected in the workplace. Some jobs are still considered to be "women's work" and some are considered men's jobs. For this project it is very important that you write down your first impressions as honestly as possible. Say what you feel, not what you think someone wants to hear. In this kind of introspection there is no right or wrong answer.

Write down in your scrapbook your first impression regarding a man who

is a nurse

is a secretary

is a first grade teacher

is a flight attendant

stays home with his children while his wife works

Write down in your scrapbook your first impression regarding a woman who

is a doctor

is a college professor

is a commercial airline pilot

is an auto mechanic

is a priest

is the major wage-earner in a two-parent household

Ask your parents or close relatives the same questions. Ask them to answer honestly. Ask why they feel that way and how they came to feel that way. Write down their responses in your scrapbook. Compare their responses with yours. Look for similarities and differences.

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Student Project (continued)

In small, in-class groups, compare your answers and those of your families with those of your classmates. Are your responses similar to anyone else's in the group? Are your families' responses similar, too? Can you trace similarities and differences to cultural reasons?

Create a chart, graph, or other illustration that shows your findings.

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marriages and brides were purchased by the groom or his family. During the Middle Ages, the nobility arranged the marriages of their children for political reasons. For example, the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469 completed the unification of Spain.

Another purpose of marriage in Europe of the Middle Ages was to ensure that a family line would continue. If the marriage was barren for some reason, then in most cases it could be annulled, and the partners were free to seek other partners. In the case of Henry VIII, when Catherine of Spain couldn't provide a male heir to the throne, he believed he had the right to remarry in order to get an heir. He later married Anne Boleyn. If a marriage was annulled that had originally been organized to create a bond between two countries, then the treaty was considered broken and the annulment could lead to war. Among nonroyal families, an annulment meant that the price of the marriage had to be returned. These European societies generally considered a barren marriage the fault of the woman, so she suffered a disgrace.

In the United States, we like to believe that we marry for love. The ideal of romantic love has become so all-encompassing—mass culture is full of it, in movies, novels, advertising, music, plays, and so on—that the thought of marriage without it seems impossible. With all this emphasis on love it is easy to forget how important the family is in our modern-day marriage rituals. Many of our marriage customs still revolve around ways of getting the future family members together: the engagement dinner brings the family together, as do the showers, rehearsal dinner, and so on.

Another cultural aspect of marriage in the contemporary United States is the idea of "bettering" yourself through marriage. Different families and different cultures define "betterment" differently: it can be a higher social status, a higher economic bracket, or marrying someone handsome enough to serve as a prop. This idea often makes its way into the ideal of marriage for love: Isn't it easier to fall in love with a beauty queen, a sports star, a doctor's son or daughter, or someone of wealth or higher social class than yourself? Would your family be more pleased

with you if you fell in love with someone who could help improve your standing in the community? How much different is this than the old world's ideal of marriage into nobility?

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with students the ideas about and attitudes toward marriage. How do students from different cultures in your class view marriage? How do the rituals differ among the various cultures?

Have students work in small groups to research and note in their scrapbooks the meanings of the following terms. They may begin with the dictionary, but they will also want to find out about cultures in which these are practiced and how well the practices work within those cultures.

endogamy
exogamy
levirate
monogamy
polyandry
polygamy
polygyny
serial marriage
sororate

Students will find information about a historical or contemporary culture that practices each one of these forms of association between the sexes. Which terms apply to their families or larger cultural groups? Which terms have negative associations, either for them or for their families? Why?

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Student Project

In your scrapbook, respond to each of the following statements with "Very Important," "Important," or "Not Important." Explain each answer.

1. My parents should approve of my choice for a husband or wife.
2. My siblings should approve of my choice for a husband or wife.
3. My extended family should approve of my choice for a husband or wife.
4. I should "better myself" through marriage.
5. I should have a formal engagement.
6. I should have a formal wedding.
7. I should have a honeymoon.
8. My marriage should be a lifetime commitment.
9. My spouse and I should be sexually faithful to each other.
10. We should have children.

Ask a family member to answer the same questions. Compare and contrast your own answers with those of your family members.

Take a look at your value wheel. Where do your feelings about marriage fit onto the wheel?

On another day, work in small groups to compare your findings. Make a group report to the rest of the class on whether different or similar answers can be traced to cultural or ethnic roots.

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Family

The family is the basic human social unit. We get our self-identity from the family, among other sources, which is one of the reasons that when it falls apart it can create such cultural and social chaos. But what exactly does *family* mean? Can it have more than one definition?

The definition of *family* changes from culture to culture and historical period to historical period. In ancient Sparta (1000–700 B.C.E.), the state was the primary family unit. A mother and father raised a child until he or she was about seven years of age, after which time custody was given over to the state. Among the Nayar of southwest India, the family unit consists of a large group of brothers and sisters; the sisters' children live within this family group, and the biological father is not important to the family.

Although it takes different forms, the fact that every culture worldwide throughout history has some form of family unit must mean that a family structure solves some problems or fills some needs of all people. The family unit provides child care, gives children adult role models, provides models of cooperation between the sexes, and controls sexual relations.

Different cultures have different "family values" and address all these issues differently. If we think about family through the lens of cultural relativism, we can see that the variety of solutions to family issues points to human creativity more than to any right or wrong answer. If we do want to talk about right and wrong we can talk in terms of how well the family structure in a particular culture solves its particular problems. For example, in the dominant culture in the United States, families tend to be small and independent, which gives each family member more freedom and individuation—both valued in that culture. But this independence can also isolate family members from nonimmediate kin and force family members to fend for themselves. For example, it tends to be very hard to raise a family as a single parent in the United States, but it would be easier among the Nayar of India, where your sisters and brothers and their children would be around to help.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students the role family plays in culture. Have them brainstorm a list of the needs family addresses. Guide them to see how families play the same role, just in different ways, in every society. Talk a bit about divorce in our society, as well. It is easier to get a divorce in the U.S. legal system (we have a no-fault divorce law) than in other legal systems. Given that the basic reason for the existence of a family structure is to care for children and provide them with adult role models, what impact does divorce have on our society? Do your students think we are a society in crisis, or simply in flux?

Government

All societies form associations that can be called "governments." Political science is the study of why we form governments and how we form governments, and asks whether there is any one best way to do it.

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, two seventeenth century English philosophers, proposed the following theory about the evolution of governments. Governments evolved, they said, when people were living in small groups in closer contact with nature because, although anything was possible, there was no security or safety. So people banded together in groups and gave up some of their freedoms in exchange for more safety.

Following is a list of a few types of governments that societies have formed.

- **Theocracy** is based on the belief that authority to govern derives from a god or gods. The will of the god or gods is communicated to the people through a king or other type of leader. To oppose the king or leader is the same thing as opposing the god or gods. Iran is a modern example of a country ruled by a theocracy.
- **Democracy** derives from the belief that authority derives from the people. The people choose from among

Student Project

How many of your friends and relatives are being raised by single parents? How many live in two-parent families? In your scrapbook, record and compare the two sets of numbers and calculate their percentages.

How many of your parents' friends or cousins were raised by single parents? How many lived in two-parent families? What about your grandparents? Create two more sets of percentages. Compare and contrast the percentages.

Has your own family structure changed within the past three generations? How? Draw your family tree to illustrate your family's structure and its changes.

Respond to the following questions in your scrapbook:

1. What kind of trends have you uncovered by doing this project?
2. What do you think the trends mean about how the family structure in your culture is changing?
3. Has the information you gathered had any effect on your plans to have a family of your own?

On another day, work in small groups to compare your results and family trees. As a group, write a paragraph or so that compares the results and discuss whether any similarities or differences in family trends might be due to cultural similarities or differences.

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themselves someone to govern. Democracy usually takes the form of a republic, in which people elect representatives on a regular basis to make laws.

- **Oligarchy** is rule by a small, elite group of people who are not responsible for justifying their decisions to the population at large. Plato's Republic depicts a good example of an oligarchy. Sparta and Rome were often referred to as oligarchies. Some critics charge that the United States is becoming one.
- **Tyranny** is rule by one person with absolute power. Tyranny is often justified in combination with theocracy; in other words, it's okay that I have all the power, because God told me I could have it. If the tyranny involves a dictator, then the government is operating on the principle of "might makes right." Joseph Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s is an example of government by tyranny.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the various types of government with your students. Consider the current government of the United States. Under which category do your students think it falls? Is it a true democracy? Is it a combination of several types?

Have students respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks:

1. Where do you think the idea of government came from?
2. What do you think government is for?
3. What kind of government do you prefer? Why?
4. If you could form your own government for this country, how would it be structured? Why?

Have students ask various family members the same questions. Do students agree with their families' answers? Why or why not? Have them ask close friends the same questions. Are their views closer to those of their families,

their friends, or different from both? What do they think the similarities and differences might mean about them, their friends, and families?

Education

Societies have many different ways to pass morals, information, traditions, and culture from one generation to the next. This passing on of cultural information is the broadest definition of *education*. In the past—and today—education has taken place in the home; in storytelling circles; in organized academies; through temples, churches, and other houses of worship; and in public and private schools. In the modern world there are many different philosophies of education. Some think only a few should be educated, some think all should have access to basic education but only the top should be selected for any advanced work and opportunity, and some think each person should have access to as much education as he or she wants or needs.

In the United States, public schools are expected to teach students a broad range of knowledge, they are expected to refrain from direct religious teaching, and students decide whether they will go on to advanced levels of schooling. Secular education in the United States places a high value on preparing all of its students for the world outside the classroom.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss with your students their education. Compare it to other forms—public, private, religious, and so on. What kinds of cultural values and definitions of "good" does this system reflect?

Have students respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks.

1. What are your educational goals? Does school teach you everything you want or think you should know?
2. Discuss with your parents what their educational goals were or are. Were their goals met? How are their

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ideas about education similar or dissimilar to yours? What were their goals when they were your age? Compare what they tell you with your responses to question 1.

3. What do think your answers and their answers say about your culture?

Science and Technology

People develop various ways of coping with nature and with their environment. We can define science very broadly to mean any way that people observe nature and construct ways to deal with the problems it presents. We can also say that technology is anything that people build, create, or invent that helps them solve the problems presented by nature. A can opener, an igloo, a space shuttle, an abacus, and a bow and arrow are all examples of technology. Each culture responds with its own technologies to similar environmental challenges.

In the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, the outside temperatures shift from one extreme to the other between day and night; it can be as hot as 110°F during the day, and then the temperature can drop as low as 60°F at night—a difference of 50 degrees. We now have cooling and heating systems, but before the advent of electricity, the native people of this region, the Hohokam, the Tohono O'odam, and the Anasazi, used a local resource—the actual soil—to build homes that stayed cool in the day and warm at night. Houses with thick walls of mud, called *adobe*, kept the cool of the night in the house during the day and the warmth of the day in during the night.

Another important technology that changes from culture to culture is food production. Everywhere people settle they have to find a way to produce the food they need. If they live in a desert, they must invent methods of irrigation, teach them to the next generation, and improve on them to keep up with the food requirements of a changing population. People living in mountainous areas must learn to grow crops on the sides of hills.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss technology with your students. While you are discussing the technology within their cultures, be sure to guide them to see the negative impacts of that technology as well as the ways in which it solves problems.

Business and Trade

The central idea in modern Western business is profit. People engage in business and trade to make money: You buy or exchange something for one price and sell or exchange it for a higher price, if you can. The difference between the amount you bought the item for and the amount you sell it for is the profit. The U.S. economy is based on this principle, and it is becoming increasingly common worldwide, even though it is a relatively new idea.

Throughout most of human history, the dominant economic idea has been reciprocity—or even exchange—instead of profit. Reciprocity means exchanging goods of roughly the same value. In the United States today, reciprocity is often seen at garage and yard sales, and when people barter for goods and labor.

Each cultural group has morals about even exchange and profit in exchanges between family members, friends, fellow members of the group, and strangers. Do I lend money to any of the above? Do I charge interest on the loan? How much? If I do something for one of these people, do I get something in return? Should I ever get more in return than I gave?

Some scholars have suggested that aggression and defense of our family and possessions make us human, but in human societies it is more often reciprocity among friends and family that governs one of our most important social roles. In each of our families and cultural groups, rules concerning trade and business are some of the most sensitive and can be the most explosive if they are not followed or understood by an outsider. Whether to trade for profit or reciprocity and in what circumstance can mean the difference between success and failure in

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Student Project

Research some of the ways your ancestors—you may need to go back only three or four generations—coped with their environment. What kind of houses did they live in? How did they produce and distribute food? How did they get around from place to place? What do you think about their solutions? Are there similarities to technologies you use today? Take notes in your scrapbook.

In small classroom groups, share your research. What are the differences and similarities among your classmates? Can you trace any differences in technology to other cultural differences? For example, if your cultural ancestors traditionally lived in adobe houses, you might think that adobe and earth tones are more aesthetically pleasing. Do you think that the technologies available to you do a good job of helping you cope with your environment? Do the technologies make your environment better or worse? In what ways?

Make a model of a technological discovery or invention that your ancestors used. Incorporate aesthetic principles.

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any intercultural exchange of value. When European immigrants started settling in the Americas, they displaced people who had lived here for centuries. Most of these groups of people did not have a cultural concept of owning the land they lived on. When the Europeans suggested—and then demanded—land purchases, disastrous consequences resulted from different definitions of value, reciprocity, and ownership.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss some of the ideas in this section with your students. Ask them to think about an ideal society. Which attitude toward business and trade would be used in such a society?

Have students respond to the following in their scrapbooks.

1. What do you think about lending money to your friends and family? Should you charge interest? How much? When you sell things to your friends and family, is it okay to sell for a profit or do you think you should sell only for an even trade?
2. Ask the same questions of your friends and family. Record the results and compare them to your own, looking for similarities and dissimilarities.
3. Think about how you would respond if their views were different from yours, For example, you don't think you should charge friends interest on a loan, but when you borrow money from a friend, she charges you interest. Or you sell something to a friend and you make a profit, and the friend finds out and is mad at you. How would you resolve the disagreement? (Hint: Try to clarify the differences and listen to your friend's reasoning to find out where the misunderstanding is. Try to reach a compromise that is win-win rather than win-lose, which causes animosity and becomes a lose-lose situation.)

Student Project

Find out what a nonprofit company is. Do you know anybody (one of your parents or an adult friend) who works for a nonprofit company? Ask what it's like, and what the differences are between working for a nonprofit and a for-profit company. Report your findings to the class, or invite your source to come and talk to the class about nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

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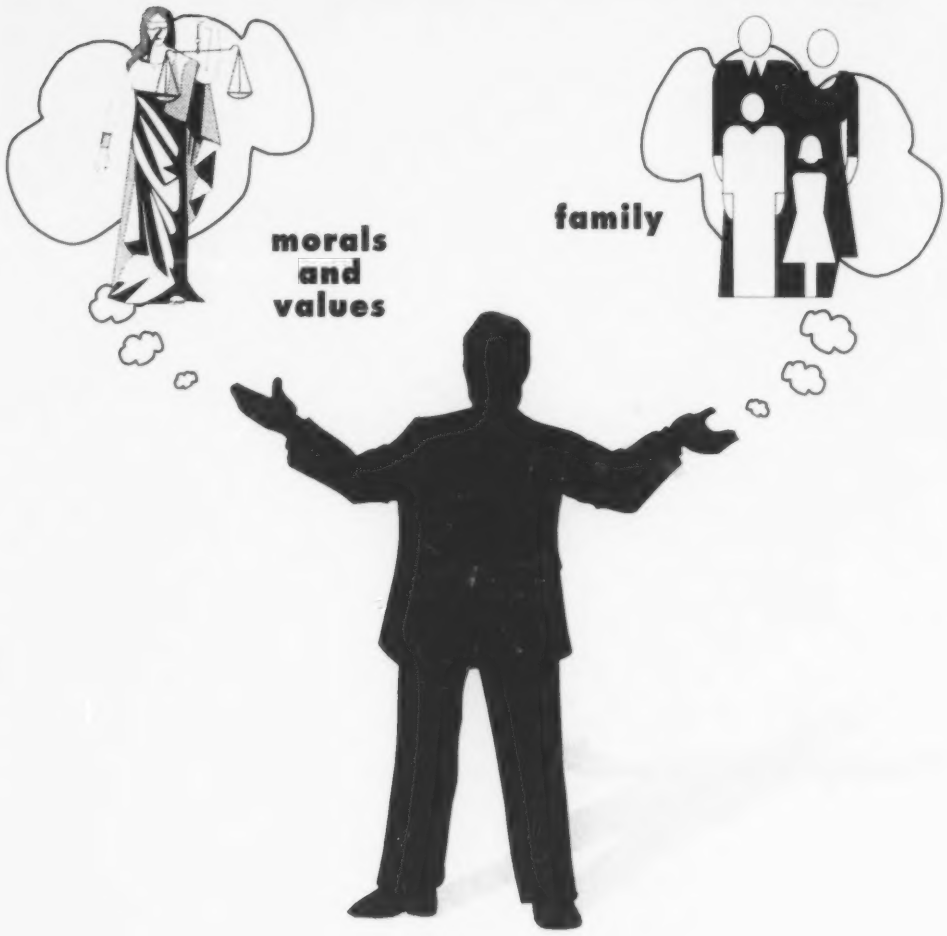
Chapter 3

Critical Thinking



There is nothing wrong with a question, for a question will only strengthen a truth or cause you to reject a falsehood.

—Socrates

Facts are facts and will not disappear on the account of your likes.

—Jawaharalal Nehru

In chapter 2, students learned that each of us belongs to a particular culture or subculture that has certain values, religious beliefs, and ideas about family, government, gender roles, and other aspects of daily life. Our culture—and these individual aspects of our culture—is what defines us as people. Our cultural systems are like glasses through which we see the world.

Students will begin to learn that their own glasses might be very different from those of their neighbors, either at school or at home. Sometimes, because our glasses are different colors, we see the world differently. And a lot of times we argue about the different ways in which we see the world.

These disagreements may be heated and emotional because they involve issues that we consider to be part of our culture, and thus an integral part of ourselves. When an argument calls part of our culture worthless or wrong, it can hurt as much as if someone were poking needles into our arms. We would probably react to the needles by pulling away our arms and maybe yelling at or hitting the person responsible. We often react in a similar way to what we see as an attack on our cultural beliefs—it's often called a knee-jerk response. While it can be honorable to defend our culture, such a response doesn't help solve a problem, help us understand one another, or help us learn anything from the experience.

If we want to understand and resolve the conflicts we have, the first step is to learn to think *critically* rather than emotionally. Once we learn to think critically, we can better understand each person's point of view, including our own.

What Is an Argument?

Think of the various meanings of *argument*. An argument is not only a shouting match or a fist fight. It also means any statement or series of statements that are intended to provide support for what you are saying. This kind of argument has two major parts: the premises and a conclusion. The conclusion is the point you are trying to make; a premise is a point that supports the conclusion.

An argument must have at least one premise for each conclusion; the more premises it has, the better the argument will stand up to rebuttal. A conclusion can be reached via either a supported premise or an unsupported premise; a strong argument, of course, uses supported premises. In this chapter, students will explore good examples of ways to create supported premises; they will also learn about and learn to avoid logical fallacies that hinder critical thinking, the "don'ts" that are examples of unsupported premises.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the various meanings of *argument* with students. What do they think of when they hear the word? Do they think of a shouting match, or maybe even a fist fight? Share with them the various meanings. Be sure that they come to a shared understanding of what you mean by the word *argument* in the context of this unit.

What Is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is one of the first steps in any kind of understanding and conflict resolution. It is especially helpful in cross-cultural interactions. Generally, *critical thinking skills help us make logical arguments and help us evaluate the arguments that other people make.* Critical thinking helps us step back from our emotions and fairly consider everyone's take on a disagreement. To learn critical thinking skills, we have to do something very difficult—we have to try to separate ourselves from ourselves.

Four Key Components of Critical Thinking

Clarity

People may listen to an argument, but they won't understand it unless what is said is clearly stated. Furthermore, making an ambiguous argument on purpose is just like saying out loud that you're trying to conceal something or don't know what you are talking about.

Precision

Precise thought and expression in language are the best ways to avoid ambiguity. Define any words you use that might be unfamiliar or have more than one meaning. The more precise your argument, the more people will understand what you have to say; thus precision can help you communicate your idea or argument to a wider audience.

Relevance

A complex problem must be thought through, deeply, if people are going to reach an understanding or resolve the difference. Thinking something through partly means not thinking *around*, or being sidetracked onto other, irrelevant issues. Sidetracks a critical thinker knows to avoid include—but could never be limited to—name calling, making an argument even though you have no evidence, invoking gender or race issues as "hot buttons" when they most likely have no place in the argument, making hasty generalizations, threatening someone into agreeing, or using anecdotal evidence.

Consistency

To be consistent in critical thinking means using the same logical methods to evaluate yourself that you use to evaluate others. For example, when we make a claim that is scientific, we are being consistent when we use scientific evidence to support our claim. We are being inconsistent if we make a scientific claim, discover that science doesn't support the claim, and so change our methodology from scientific to some other form of argument, such as religious. Here is an example: I argue that science can show there's a high probability that UFOs exist. Then, the person I'm arguing with shows me scientifically—by using a math or statistics problem—that the opposite is actually true. I don't like that answer, so I say, "Well, science doesn't have all the answers," or "Someday, science will show that I was right." When I say this, my argument has become inconsistent.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the four key components of critical thinking with your students. Be sure they can think up some examples of each. Have them take notes in their scrapbooks. Then divide the class evenly into four groups and assign one component to each group for the student project on page 74.

A Critical Thinker . . .

A Critical Thinker Asks Clear Questions

The first step in solving a problem or settling a disagreement is to make sure we understand the question. A clear question presents the whole issue instead of just one or two parts and doesn't make any assumptions about what the answer might be. Once we understand the question, the second step is to figure out if the question can be answered at all. Sometimes a problem can't be resolved because there isn't enough information to answer the question or because the question is actually irrelevant to the larger problem. Looking closely at the question before trying to find an answer will keep us from getting involved in arguments that are confusing, nonsensical, contradictory, unanswerable, or irrelevant.

If someone asks a question or starts an argument, don't be afraid to take your time to make sure you understand the question before you reply. Exploring the question doesn't mean that you're less intelligent than the other person; in fact, it means that you are a thoughtful person.

A good way to make sure that you ask a good question is to ask yourself, before posing a question to anyone else, "What do I want to accomplish by asking this question?" If you know what you want to accomplish and make sure that the question makes that clear, then the lines of communication will be crystal clear. You need to be careful that you are not asking a self-serving question; that is, you need to be sure your question is meant to gather information and understand rather than to set up or undermine a person with whom you are having a discussion.

With the loss of tradition, we have lost the thread which safely guided us through the vast realms of the past, but this thread was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past

—Hannah Arendt

Student Project

Work in your group to make a poster for your assigned skill. Be creative; bring the talents of each member of your group to bear on your project. What words are critical to using this skill? What would this skill look like in a picture? What about a song? Maybe you can write a poem and illustrate it. Map out your ideas in your scrapbooks and plan carefully. When you have come up with a concept that every member of your group can support, create your poster. Hang it with the posters of the other three groups in a prominent place in your classroom. When you want to discuss something with a classmate, study the posters before beginning so you can respectfully and clearly explain your position.

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Student Project

Working alone, choose a letter or editorial from your local newspaper. Pick one with whose position you don't agree. Examine the letter or editorial carefully for the quality of the argument. Remember, you are not deciding whether you agree with the writer's position; you are evaluating the quality of the argument based on the presence or absence of the four key components. In your scrapbook, respond to the following questions and take general notes on the quality of the piece.

1. Which of the four key components, if any, does the letter or editorial have?
2. Which does it not have?
3. Does the writer use ambiguous words or is the language clear?
4. Is every sentence relevant to the issue?
5. Is the writer consistent throughout in terms of logic, methodology, and information?

Rewrite the original letter to remove any mistakes you found. Exchange your rewritten letters with a classmate, and examine the new version for the same qualities.

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Discussion and Reflection

As a class, discuss the qualities of good questions. You may want to search literature and movies for examples of poorly constructed questions. You may also want to discuss some literary conflicts and ask students to formulate questions that would have helped avoid the conflict.

A Critical Thinker Carefully Defines Terms

In any language, a lot of words have more than one meaning. Either the dictionary lists more than one definition, or the word means different things to different people.

An example of the first kind of word is *man* in the following argument: *Man is a rational animal. Women are not men. Therefore women are not rational.* In the first sentence *man* means "humankind." In the second sentence, *men* means "male human beings." When we are thinking critically and arguing carefully, we must listen, read, and speak carefully to make sure that the meanings of the words we use are consistent throughout.

The same word can also mean different things to different people, whether or not there are different meanings in the dictionary. For example, *family* might mean one thing to a girl who gets along really well with her parents and spends a lot of time with both of them, and something completely different to a boy whose dad yells all the time and has hit him more than once. The kinds of words that might fall into this category of ambiguity are usually words to which people attach emotions. In other words, they have a literal meaning (family = the people I'm biologically related to) and an emotional meaning (family = my nice mom and dad, or family = my dad who's mean). Because different people have different definitions for the same word, it's important that we say up front what we mean when we use words that might have other meanings to the people we're talking to.

Student Project

Videotape and then watch a news interview on television, or find a transcript of a news interview or press conference in the newspaper. In your scrapbook, evaluate each of the questions asked for clarity and completeness. Choose a particularly well-formulated question and an especially bad question to share with the class.

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Discussion and Reflection

As a class, brainstorm a list of terms that may be ambiguous. Ask for volunteers to share stories of misunderstandings that resulted because two people were using the same word differently.

A Critical Thinker Knows the Difference between Opinion and Evidence

We all have personal opinions—things we believe to be absolutely true and wild horses couldn't make us change our minds. Our opinions are often based on our core values and morals, and we intellectually inherit many of them from our families and from our larger culture.

Thought takes humans out of servitude, into freedom.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

There are actually two kinds of opinions. Some are based on ignorance or lack of information. For example, I might believe it is impossible to melt ice without heat because I have never seen it done. This kind of opinion often makes us blind to any ideas that contradict what we think is true, which in turn makes it hard to accept anyone else's idea for solving a problem. The second kind of opinion is based on our core values and is a lot like the foundation of a building—any argument we make will be built on top of these core values. For example, if I believe in God, and therefore believe in the truthfulness of the Bible, a lot of my opinions will be based on what the Bible tells me. I may believe that Adam and Eve were literally the first two humans, and my attitudes about women may be built on the role Eve played in the expulsion from Eden.

Opinions get in the way of critical thinking when we substitute them for facts. We tend to substitute either because we believe in the opinions so strongly or because we don't even recognize that they are opinions and not facts. For example, what is the underlying opinion in this argument: "What good is school? It won't get me a job." The underlying opinion—or assumption—is that the purpose of education is to provide you with a job.

Student Project

Choose five words from the list you brainstormed in class, or come up with five words of your own. Write in your scrapbook what you think each one means. Write down what the dictionary says each one means.

Think of three people you know who are very different from one another, and ask each of them what each word means. Which one word on your list do people have the most widely varying definitions for? Think up a sentence using this word that the three people would each read very differently based on their emotional definitions of the word.

Read your sentence to your class and discuss the various ways it could be taken.

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Opinions are often ethnocentric and might contradict someone else's opinions or values. One of the risks we run when we base our arguments on opinions instead of on facts is alienating the other person because we appear to attack her strongly held beliefs.

It can be pretty easy to notice when somebody else uses opinions or assumptions instead of facts, especially when she is making an argument with which we disagree. What's more difficult is recognizing our own opinions—and the ones in arguments that we agree with—as such. If we *can* learn to see the opinions in our own arguments, we can do one of two things. We can share our "foundation opinions" with the people we're arguing with and ask them to respect the fact that they are based on our most important values. Then it's nice to return the favor. Or we can think about whether our opinions are based on ignorance and try to learn more and listen to people with ideas that are different from ours.

Discussion and Reflection

In front of your class, state several opinions as facts. For example, you might say, "So and so is a poor actor." "Such and such is a great song." Have students respond individually to the opinions in the scrapbooks. First, they list any feelings they have as you make the statements. Do they get angry? Do they laugh? Do they feel put down? Then, they respond on a cognitive level. Do they agree or disagree? What criteria can they give to support their positions? What criteria can they give to support the opposing viewpoint? Work on restating your statements as opinion. For example, "I don't like so and so's acting." "I really love that song." Have students examine how their emotional responses change and whether they are able to look at the criteria more quickly.

Do the project on page 81. You can do it either as in-class oral presentations or as written reports in small groups. Remind students to avoid any comments that attack the person instead of the argument.

Student Project

Without doing any research, take turns briefly presenting arguments that you believe are true to your group. Critique each presenter's argument, based only on whether the presenter uses opinions in place of factual evidence. The point at this stage is not to debate whether the argument is right or wrong, but to practice distinguishing opinions from facts. For each argument, discuss whether any listeners feel personally attacked. Try to trace any hurt feelings to a specific part of the argument.

Rewrite the argument to remove the opinions your classmates helped you identify. What facts would effectively replace the opinions? Present the revised argument. Do any of the hurt feelings recur? Why or why not? Are these feelings related to the same parts of the argument as before?

Compare the two versions of each argument for general strengths and weaknesses. Which one is more convincing? Why?

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A Critical Thinker Knows How to Allow for the Existence of Stereotypes

Stereotyping is a very real part of what our brains do with information—our brains work by making types or "boxes" into which we can fit all information. These boxes can make it hard to believe that there is information that actually doesn't fit into the types. We are sometimes taught to pretend that stereotyping doesn't happen, along with being taught that it isn't right or appropriate. While it is true that stereotyping doesn't help solve problems and isn't really a valuable part of critical thinking, it is something that happens, even to the best critical thinkers. We can only understand our hidden prejudices and stereotyping by first admitting that we do stereotype.

As children, we learn our prejudices and fears, types of stereotypes, from everyone around us, including our parents, friends, and our culture in general. In order to really see and communicate with people who are different from us, we have to be able to admit our emotional perceptions (which might include stereotypes and fears) and then *move forward* to deal with our stereotypes in constructive ways.

Discussion and Reflection

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Have students write in their scrapbooks and then share with their groups stereotypes that others have applied to them. They include in their disclosure to their groups their feelings when they were so categorized. Have the groups analyze the stereotypes presented for origin (that is, from what possible characteristics did the stereotype originate?); for misstatements (where does the stereotype overstep the bounds of coherent critical thought?); for validity (where is the stereotype cogent and what might be a positive take on it?).

Before students begin the project on page 84, talk about ground rules: Their discussion must always be respectful of other people's feelings. They will avoid personal

attacks. This project is a way to explore the stereotypes they may have without realizing it; it is not a method of judging.

Read the six examples aloud, then follow the rest of the instructions listed on the student project.

A Critical Thinker Admits Ignorance and Is Willing to Learn

Admitting ignorance is the beginning of all wisdom.

—Socrates

This aspect of critical thinking is closely related to the previous one. Ignorance can lead us to develop assumptions or hard-headed opinions that prevent us from seeing alternative solutions to a problem. If, however, we are willing to learn, we might discover a whole new way of looking at a problem.

No one knows *everything*, so it is no big deal to admit when we don't know very much about a topic. Chances are, *someone* knows about it and can either tell us about it or give us a book to read!

When someone makes an argument about a topic that you don't understand, you have three choices.

1. If you aren't interested in the subject or if you don't want to take the time to learn more, you can excuse yourself from the argument. You can't contribute intelligently if you don't know or won't take the time to learn.
2. You can pretend you know what you're talking about so that you can state your opinions, and you can hope no one involved in the discussion knows enough to find you out.
3. You can say, "I guess I don't really understand the argument you're making. Could you rephrase it? And do you know where I could get some more information so we could talk intelligently about this subject after I've learned a little more?"

Student Project

Write down your immediate internal responses to seeing each of the following people:

a blond, blue-eyed child
an American Indian
an Asian American
a Hispanic American
an African American
a person driving a low-rider car

Take the list of people home and ask one or two of your family members what their immediate reactions are. Are their reactions similar to yours? Are their reactions different? What conclusions can you draw from the ways your immediate perceptions are the same as or different from those of your family?

In small groups, compare your answers with those of your classmates. How do your answers compare? Are there any common denominators? Are these common denominators cultural?

Still working in your small groups, talk about possible conflicts that could arise in which the stereotypes you've shared could prevent resolution. Figure out a way to allow for the existence of stereotypes without letting them interfere with the resolution of conflicts.

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Student Project (continued)

There are four important steps to this process.

1. Recognize that you did stereotype, which sometimes means listening when someone suggests that you have done this.
2. Accept the proposition that stereotyping is not a good way to resolve a conflict.
3. Decide what's more important: holding on to your stereotype or resolving the situation.
4. Learn if the stereotype is false—talk to the person who was stereotyped.

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This last option is the best route to take if you're really interested in resolving the subject. The first option is okay, *if* you're willing to admit that you don't know enough to help resolve the problem. The second choice is the worst approach. You might actually make the problem worse, because your attempt to save face or gratify your own ego might become your biggest concern—instead of finding a solution to the problem.

When you commit to the last option, you've made a commitment to expose yourself to ideas you may not like. Luckily, there's really nothing to lose. If, after listening to others' ideas, you still disagree, then you've still learned more about the topic.

Wouldn't it be nice if learning new information were as easy as just *wanting* to learn it? But learning can be hard work, and it's important to remember that when we make a commitment to learn more about a subject. The process of learning has a number of requirements that, when factored in, can make learning less appealing. But it's always better to know up front what kind of commitment you're making. Some of those requirements follow:

- Learning requires curiosity.
- Learning involves the risk of learning information that goes against cherished beliefs or opinions.
- Learning takes time.
- Learning requires a commitment to follow the path wherever it may lead.
- Learning requires discipline to follow through, or stick-to-itiveness.
- Learning, since it involves all the above requirements, takes a lot of energy.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the concepts in this section at length. Have students generate in their scrapbooks a list of subjects related to cultures they feel are worth the effort to learn more about.

Have students individually choose topics about which they don't know anything but about which they would like to learn. They should pick subjects that would make good debates or arguments; some possibilities are gun control, free day care for working moms, free health care, or grade-point-average requirements for college athletes. Individually, they will write down their current positions on the topics.

Next, they will brainstorm a list of five things they can do to learn more about the subject, including reading a book or a magazine, or talking to someone who knows a lot about the topic. They will make a commitment to follow through each step and take notes in their scrapbooks of the information learned and who or what source they learned it from. When they've completed the five steps, they will write down their positions on their individual topics.

Have them respond to the following questions in their scrapbooks:

1. Has your original position changed? In what ways did it change, or why do you think it didn't change?
2. If your position didn't change, do you have a better understanding of the opposing position?
3. Which position do you think would convince more people, your "pre" or "post" position?
4. Which one do you think would stand up better to criticism?

A Critical Thinker Uses All the Evidence

When we make a case for something, we must support our argument with evidence. The evidence—which usually consists of factual information—needs to be relevant to the argument and needs to be clearly presented to our listeners. If we make an argument without backing it up with any facts, or with very few facts, why would anyone believe us?

It would be nice if all we had to do was use facts, but we have to be careful with *how* we use them, too. A good argument

considers *all* the facts that are related to the subject, even when—and this is where it gets difficult—the facts contradict our original position. We need to be careful not to include only facts that support our argument while ignoring facts that contradict it. Finally, a critical thinker doesn't exaggerate facts to make an argument stronger. If that's the only way to make an argument stronger, maybe the argument shouldn't be made in the first place.

Discussion and Reflection

Ask students to come up with some professions that thrive on not including all the facts. Do journalists always include all the facts? What about politicians? Doctors? Teachers? Car salespeople? What are some of the benefits of not including the facts? Have students rate the "trust factor" of the various professions they have named. For example, students may say that politicians don't include all the facts in their debates and we generally consider them untrustworthy. Have them reflect individually in their scrapbooks on the importance of including the facts.

A Critical Thinker Connects the Evidence to the Conclusion with Well-Constructed Inferences

Inference is another word for our interpretation of the evidence, which we can do well or poorly. The inferences we make in an argument are the bridge between the observable evidence that we cite and the conclusion that we draw. Rarely can a convincing argument be made by simply presenting the evidence and expecting other people to see what we see. Our arguments are only as good as the inferences we make from them.

A well-formulated inference makes clear connections between a premise and a conclusion, and is neither superficial nor hastily drawn. Poorly formulated inferences can weaken an argument to the point where it doesn't make sense. One quality of a hastily constructed inference is that it tends to support the values that we hold most dear, even if the observed evidence

Student Project

Choose a problem or situation at school that you feel is particularly important. Why do you think it is important? Write down all the important facts you know or can find out regarding this issue. Do you think you got all of them?

Ask a teacher or an administrator for the facts he or she knows about the issue. Ask him or her whether he or she believes the issue is important, and why.

Respond to the following questions in your scrapbook:

1. Are your facts and the teacher's facts the same?
2. Is the issue as important to you as it was before you questioned the faculty member?
3. Do you think the issue is equally important to you and the faculty member? Why or why not?
4. If your facts differ from those of the faculty member, do you think that has anything to do with your different views on the subject?

With a few classmates who are concerned with the same issue, write a carefully constructed proposal to solve the problem. Be sure to consider both sides of the issue. Give your proposal to a faculty member who will help you get it heard.

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is contradictory. Critical thinkers learn to closely examine all their inferences and to check them out even more carefully when their own interests or values are involved in the argument.

Discussion and Reflection

Read these situations aloud, and ask students to write down in their scrapbooks how they would interpret each situation. What kind of meaning do they draw from the scene? How do they define the person in each scene?

I like to think of thoughts as living blossoms borne by the human tree.

—James Douglas

someone on a motorcycle

someone on a motorcycle in a black leather jacket

someone on a motorcycle in a black leather jacket with long hair and a beard

a thin male taller than six feet eight inches

a slammed door

a person crying

a person carrying a Bible

a person dressed in nice clothes driving a new car early in the morning

a person dressed in baggy pants and a T-shirt, and getting into a new car at three in the morning

a minivan full of children with a woman driving

someone laughing

someone sleeping in the park

Spend some time comparing inferences among classmates. Stress that the same physical "evidence" often has two or three facets of interpretation. Then write the scenarios on the board before students begin the project.

A Critical Thinker Is Concerned with Consequences

When we argue a case, we need to be sure that we have thought about all the possible consequences of what we're advocating; when we support a particular position, we are saying that we

support whatever implications that position might have. To understand the consequences, we have to follow an argument wherever it leads. A good way to do so is to ask questions such as, "If this is true, what else has to be true? And if this second thing is true, what else has to be true?" When we ask ourselves these questions, we might find that our argument leads somewhere we don't want to go after all.

Discussion and Reflection

Spend a few moments as a class discussing the ideas in this section. Ask for individual stories about times when someone got something she or he wanted and the outcome had negative or positive consequences the student didn't foresee.

A Critical Thinker Critiques Her or His Own Arguments as Carefully as She or He Critiques Others'

We are not born critical thinkers, nor is it a skill that we can learn overnight. It takes practice and a lot of careful listening, but the skills are critical to success in school and successful conflict resolution. As we start to learn to be critical thinkers, we will quickly find out that it is much easier to critique other people's arguments than our own. This ease is partly because we assume that our own arguments are always right, and we listen more closely for errors in arguments that we want to prove wrong. As we develop higher-order critical thinking skills, we begin to value truth and conflict resolution higher than we value our own opinions. And to successfully resolve conflicts, we need to be as consistent, critical, and precise as we want others to be.

Student Project

Write the list of scenarios to which you responded in the discussion in your scrapbook. Did you base your inferences solely on the observable evidence, or did you make assumptions that allowed you to draw the inferences that you did?

Next to each inference, write down the assumptions you made.

Following is an example of how different assumptions can lead to various inferences.

Situation	Assumption	Inference
A low rider on the street.	Only gang members drive low riders.	The driver is a gang member
A low rider on the street.	Only young adults drive low riders.	The driver is a young adult.

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Student Project (continued)

In small groups, compare your inferences with those of your classmates. Respond to the following questions in your scrapbook.

1. Are your group members' inferences the same or different?
2. What assumptions did you make to construct your inferences?
3. Are your group's assumptions similar or different?
4. Why did you make those particular assumptions? Because of your personal experiences, your ethnic background, a prejudice, or another reason?
5. Do you think it is possible to change your assumptions and your inferences? Do you want to? How do you think it's possible?
6. What has this exercise taught you about yourself? Have you learned anything that will help you understand yourself, your culture, and critical thinking?

Think about what makes a strong inference and what makes a poor one. How would you avoid making poor inferences? What would you say to help others avoid them. In your group, prepare a poem or short slogan to remind students how to avoid poor inferences. Design your slogan into a poster to display in your classroom or write your poem into a song and teach it to your classmates.

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Student Project

Return to the observations and inferences you made in the previous project. For each of the twelve inferences you made, write down possible consequences of that inference.

Review the difference between a strong and a weak inference and construct new inferences for each of the twelve situations. Write down possible consequences of making each new inference. How are the two sets of possible consequences different? What kind of effect might each consequence have, both on yourself and on the person in the observation?

With your group, choose one inference from the list of twelve and write a skit that shows what you learned. Perform the skit for your class.

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Discussion and Reflection

Encourage students to write all papers, letters, or other projects ahead of schedule and to let the writings sit for a few days. When they gain the distance this practice affords, they can approach their writings more objectively and perhaps deal with some of the problems in their own thinking.

Later, you will have students do the student project on page 106, and when they have finished, discuss the last paragraph. If students note that they were able to apply criticism to their own letters, lead a discussion about how it's easier to critique others' work than to critique our own. The other primary point of this project is to give students practice critiquing other people's work fairly and respectfully.

A Critical Thinker Avoids Logical Fallacies

Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to Force

A critical thinker isn't a bully. Throughout the history of the world, individuals, groups, and governments have tried to use psychological or physical force to make others accept an opinion. This force may manifest itself in torture, annihilation, or incarceration. It can also be a threat that you'll be kicked out of a group you belong to if you don't agree. But superior force does not make a person's argument true or valid.

Sometimes it's hard to keep emotions out of the way, particularly when the subject is especially dear—or repulsive—to us. But verbally or physically attacking others to make them agree with us doesn't add any value to our position—it merely proves that we are stronger or more violent, not that we are right.

Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to the Person

A critical thinker doesn't attack or direct the argument to the person taking another viewpoint. In other words, the thinker does not insult the individual, refer to a cultural or ethnic group, refer to job or status in the community, or in any other way attack the individual. Stereotyping falls under this fallacy.

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Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to Misplaced Authority

A critical thinker doesn't assume that because people are experts in one field, they're automatically experts in another. Actors are often used to sell products simply because of name recognition or the role they may have played. In reality, they probably know nothing about the product. When a critical thinker refers to someone in an argument, that person should be knowledgeable in the field and not just a name.

Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to Pity

Sometimes, especially in arguments about emotional issues, we might use pity or sympathy to convince people that we're right. For instance, an employee may go to his boss and say, "I missed my deadline because I'm going through a divorce." A critical thinker knows that sympathy is not necessarily relevant to the argument.

Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to Tradition

An argument with proof based solely on tradition has a number of holes. Present conditions may be very different from those that existed when the traditional thought or theory took hold. It is not a stretch to say that things were probably done in the past that were wrong. Some arguments from the past are applicable now, but their reasons and evidence must be based in the present; they are not true just because they worked or were popular in the past.

If tradition were a part of logic, Copernicus never could have convinced anyone that the Sun, instead of Earth, is the center of our solar system. In fact, we would have none of the world's great discoveries, inventions, or revolutionary ideas, all of which came from women and men who had to convince the people around them that there was a new, different way to do something or understand something.

Fallacies of Relevancy: Appeal to Ignorance

A critical thinker knows that showing that something is false doesn't prove a different viewpoint is true. Negative evidence only supports a negative conclusion; in other words, you can only prove that something is not true with negative evidence,

not that something else is true. Simply because I may know more about a topic than you, or because there is no empirical evidence in existence right now, doesn't mean that you do not have a valid point. An example of such a fallacy is, "You can't prove God exists; therefore she doesn't."

Fallacies of Content: Hasty Generalizations or Oversimplification

When we draw a conclusion based on what "people in general" think, do, or say, we are making one kind of generalization. Generalizations are dangerous because "people in general" are a pretty diverse group—as we've been learning—so any statement about how *all* of us behave is likely to have more than one exception. When we're looking for the truth, we need to look beyond generalizations. Truth is about observation and evidence. Talking about what people think, do, say, or believe only tells what they think, do, say, or believe. It doesn't tell us much at all about what is true.

You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.

—James Allen

Another kind of generalization is saying that something happens all the time or always. The problem with a generalization is that, if there is even one instance when what you are saying wasn't true, then your premise becomes completely false, regardless of whether it has some validity.

A similar pitfall to generalizations is oversimplification. A lot of the issues that we argue about are extremely complicated, with lots of causes and lots of effects, lots of players involved, and so on. It can become frustrating to try to untangle a complicated problem, and sometimes there is a temptation to oversimplify the issue.

Anecdotal evidence often falls in this category. In other words, you use a direct observation as a premise instead combining it with other forms of evidence. An example would be, "While I was in the grocery store checkout lane yesterday, I saw someone using food stamps to buy steaks. I can't buy steaks on my salary, so people on food stamps misuse the program. I think the food stamp program should be completely revamped." Another example is, "I know someone on welfare and he has never wanted to work a day in his life. He has even had jobs offered to him but he refused to take them. We should

get rid of the whole welfare program because only freeloaders use it."

Our personal experiences are important and are often a good starting place for forming the opinions and values from which we might make arguments. However, they are *not* all we need to make a convincing, logical argument.

Fallacies of Content: Either/Or Thinking

No amount of energy will take the place of thought. A strenuous life with its eyes shut is a kind of wild insanity.

—Henry Van Dyke

Sometimes we might make the mistake of thinking there are only two sides to a story. This approach can keep us from searching out the true cause of an event, or a third—or fourth, or fifth, and so on—solution to a problem. This kind of faulty reasoning is often called either/or thinking.

The following situation is an example of such a dilemma. Sally had incurable cancer. She went to many doctors and tried all kinds of different treatments. None of them worked. She started to pray every night, and she believes God told her to give up her treatments. She gave up her treatments, and she believes she is cured. If Sally says, "Since the medicine didn't work, it must have been a miracle," she has turned the situation into an either/or dilemma. There could be many other explanations for what happened. She may not have been cured; if she hasn't been back to a doctor, how does she know? Perhaps her last treatment had a delayed reaction. Perhaps the prayer gave her a sense of peace that encouraged her body's immune system. Perhaps her body would have cured itself on its own.

Fallacies of Content: Accent

If I give a speech about the virtues of capitalism but leave out or downplay the vices involved to convince you to follow my plan I have committed the fallacy of accent. Other ways of doing this are to change charts and graphs to show only what I want to appear. Politicians love to use this one when running for election.

Fallacies of Definition: Amphibole

Amphibole is the use of ambiguous or meaningless terms that don't clarify but cloud an issue. Politicians love this one. For

example, politicians love to bandy about the phrase "family values." It is an emotional term, one that most people would agree is important. But is there a distinct definition of the term? To me, it may mean preserving two-parent nuclear families. To you, it may mean supporting single-parent families. A critical thinker recognizes nebulous or misleading terms and seeks out other evidence.

Fallacies of Definition: Equivocation

This fallacy is related to amphibole. It is the use of words or phrases that have more than one clear definition to cloud an issue. In the following saying, "The end of life is happiness; death is the end of life; therefore, death is happiness," *end* is first used to mean "purpose," then "a cessation"; a conclusion is drawn as if the two meanings were the same.

Fallacies of Quality: False Cause

A false cause argument forces a causal relationship where one doesn't exist. The most common way of making a false cause argument is by saying that event A happened before event B, so therefore event A caused B. True, any causal relationship requires a "before-and-after" sequence, but event A and event B must also be connected in some way. Often, causal relationships are difficult to establish even though the time element may be certain. Social and cultural causes are some of the most difficult to establish. False cause relies only on the time sequence, instead of trying to unravel social and cultural causes.

A contemporary example of a false cause argument is the following: "O. J. Simpson was acquitted because the jury was predominantly African American." It is true that O. J. Simpson was acquitted of murdering his ex-wife and her friend, and it is true that the jury was composed primarily of African Americans. But the argument overlooks some important facts, including that African American jurors have convicted African American defendants in other trials. Another plausible argument regarding the verdict in O. J. Simpson's trial, one that does not fall prey to false causes, is that the jury thought the evidence was insufficient to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Fallacies of Quality: Genetic Fallacy

This is an argument that attempts to establish the truth or falsity of a claim based on the origin of the claim. The truth of the claim is based on the evidence supporting it, not on where or how the author came about it. Special relativity is not false because Albert Einstein discovered it while imagining what it would be like to ride a light beam. If I were to discover a truth in a delirious state and then be able to support it, my delirium does not make the claim invalid.

Fallacies of Quality: Begging the Question

All arguments, as we learned earlier in this section, have to have at least one premise and a conclusion. Begging the question uses the premise as the conclusion, and so there is really no argument. People rarely beg the question literally; instead we use synonyms and change the word order of our sentences. Begging the question, therefore, can be pretty sneaky. An example is "God exists because the Bible says so, and the Bible is the word of God." The conclusion that God exists is "proved" by repeating the premise that the Bible is the word of God.

Fallacies of Quality: Division and Composition

A critical thinker knows that the qualities of the parts aren't necessarily the same as those of the whole. And the qualities of the whole aren't necessarily the same as those of the individual parts. This kind of poor reasoning can be applied to people or things. A simple example of the first kind of pitfall is, "Everything in the universe has a beginning. Therefore, the universe has a beginning." The opposite error is made when we apply information about a group to the individual members of the group. An example is, "Leonard comes from a part of town that has a high crime rate. Therefore, we should keep an eye on him so he doesn't steal anything." An argument based on this kind of poor reasoning is a good tool for stereotyping, because the argument seems to be based on factual evidence. Compare the following two examples:

The south side of town has a lot of criminals.
Joe is from the south side.
Therefore, Joe is a criminal.

Even if the first premise is true, the measurement "a lot" is vague, and the statement says nothing about Joe as an individual. Now compare the first example to this argument:

Everyone on the south side of town is a criminal.
Joe is from the south side.
Therefore Joe is a criminal.

This example is a valid argument, *if* the first sentence is literally true and *everyone* on the south side is a criminal. The problem with this argument, however, is that the odds that the first premise is true are next to none. If the first premise is false, then the rest of the argument has to be false. These two examples are very similar, but they represent different mistakes in logic. It is important that we listen carefully—to ourselves and to others—in order to hear the small differences in the way an argument is presented that make such a big difference in its truthfulness.

A related argument is that if I agree with someone's conclusion, then I agree with his or her reasons for it. There is no inconsistency in agreeing with a position but not with the reasons. I may agree with you that it is wrong to kill someone. Your reason for believing killing is wrong may be because "Thou shalt not kill" is one of the ten commandments in the Judeo-Christian faith; my reason may be because I think everyone loves life.

Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the various fallacies and how to avoid them. Have students come up with several examples of each, if possible, or go right into the student project. Then have students list the following arguments in their scrapbooks and decide whether or not they are valid arguments. They will write beside each the problems with the logic, if any, then rewrite the statements to reflect sound critical thinking principles. The problems with logic are included after the statement to help you help your students. Your students and you may recognize more problems with the logic than those listed here, however.

1. Everyone speeds, so there can't be anything wrong with it. (Appeal to tradition)
2. Members of Generation X commit a lot of crimes. This generation has watched more TV than any other generation and there is lots of violence on TV. Therefore TV is the cause of the violence in this generation. (False cause)
3. I can't believe that you are an atheist. Don't you know what will happen to you when you die and have to face God? (Appeal to force; begs the question)
4. How can you not believe in the existence of UFOs? What other explanation would you have for crop circles and alien abductions? (Appeal to ignorance)
5. Most of the people in prison in this country are minorities. Therefore, if you hear that someone is a convict, that person is probably a minority. (Composition)
6. I know that I've missed a lot of school, but my mother has been sick and I come from a poor family. (Appeal to pity)
7. We need to revamp the entire welfare system. Why, I know someone who has been on welfare his entire life, and could easily work. (False generalization; composition)
8. All Americans are happy. Harry is an American. Therefore, Harry is happy. (The premise is a generalization)
9. To be equal is to be the same. No two people are the same. Therefore, the Declaration of Independence is wrong because none of us are the same. (Equivocation regarding word *equal*)
10. No one in our family has ever been an artist. Artists are usually moral degenerates. If you choose to become an artist we will disinherit you. (Appeal to tradition; appeal to force)
11. Either you go to a school counselor or you continue in your error. The choice is yours. (Either/or thinking)

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12. I went to interview the president for the radio, but he wouldn't see me. In fact he had the Secret Service throw me out. Therefore, he must have been afraid of my probing questions. (Accent)
13. Isn't it true that students who study get As? Therefore, if you want me to study hard you should give me all As. (A false cause.)
14. Women should not have to register for the draft, because women should not have to go into the military. (Begs the question)
15. Dress for success because you can't be successful unless you do. (Begs the question; false cause)
16. I'm not going to believe your argument that alcohol is harmful to your health because you drink. (Appeal to the person)

Make three copies for each student of the work sheet on page 105.

When we ask the ultimate questions, whether about the direction of our own lives, or about the meaning of existence, the outcome of thinking is not an answer but a transformed way of thinking, not propositions to assent to but heightened power of apprehension.

—Helen Merrell Lynd

Student Project

Scan the editorial section of the newspaper to find five different examples of the kinds of critical thinking "pitfalls" discussed in this section. Refer to the handout to rewrite the argument, avoiding the pitfall the original writer made. Try to strengthen the original argument by using a critical thinking skill that the original writer did not use.

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Critical Thinking

Four Key Components

Clarity • Precision • Relevance • Consistency

Dos

A critical thinker asks clear questions.

A critical thinker carefully defines terms.

A critical thinker knows that showing that something can be false doesn't make it true.

A critical thinker knows the difference between opinion and evidence.

A critical thinker knows how to allow for the existence of stereotypes.

A critical thinker admits ignorance and is willing to learn.

A critical thinker uses all the evidence.

A critical thinker knows that something isn't right or true just because people have always believed it to be true.

A critical thinker knows that there are more than two sides to every story and more than two possible solutions to every problem.

A critical thinker connects the evidence to the conclusion with well-constructed inferences.

A critical thinker is concerned with consequences.

A critical thinker knows that the qualities of the parts aren't necessarily the same as those of the whole and the qualities of the whole aren't necessarily the same as those of the individual parts.

A critical thinker critiques her or his own arguments as carefully as she or he critiques those of others.

Don'ts

A critical thinker doesn't make it personal.

A critical thinker doesn't make false generalizations or oversimplify an issue.

A critical thinker doesn't manipulate people's emotions.

A critical thinker doesn't rely solely on anecdotal evidence.

A critical thinker doesn't beg the question.

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Student Project

Write a letter to the editor that makes a case about a problem at your school. Provide specifics about how you would solve the problem. Employ the skills you learned in this chapter.

Put the letter away for a few days; do not look at it during that time.

After the waiting period, read the letter carefully and consider whether it can be improved. Don't make the changes on the letter itself. Instead, keep track of your ideas for improvements in your scrapbook.

Choose a classmate and exchange letters. Read each other's letters and make a list of suggested improvements, as you did for your own letter. Remember to critique your classmate's letter as you would like yours critiqued—with fairness and respect. Make photocopies of your suggestions for your classmate's letter and return the original comments with your classmate's letter.

Compare your own suggestions for improving your letter with your classmate's suggestions for improving your letter. Keep some notes about how the two sets of suggestions are similar and different. Do your classmate's suggestions make sense? If they do not, ask your classmate to clarify.

Compare your suggestions for improving your classmate's letter with your own suggestions for improving your own letter. Keep some notes on how they are they similar and different. Are any of your suggestions for improving your classmate's letter applicable to your own letter? If they are, add those suggestions to your list of improvements.

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Student Project (continued)

Rewrite your own letter, adding the improvements from the list you've been keeping.

As a class, submit your new letters to your school principal. Ask him or her to write down responses to each letter, addressing feasibility of your plan and strength of your argument.

Discuss the principal's responses in small groups. Do you notice any correlation between the principal's responses and the strength or weakness of the letter? On which of your group's suggestions can you act?

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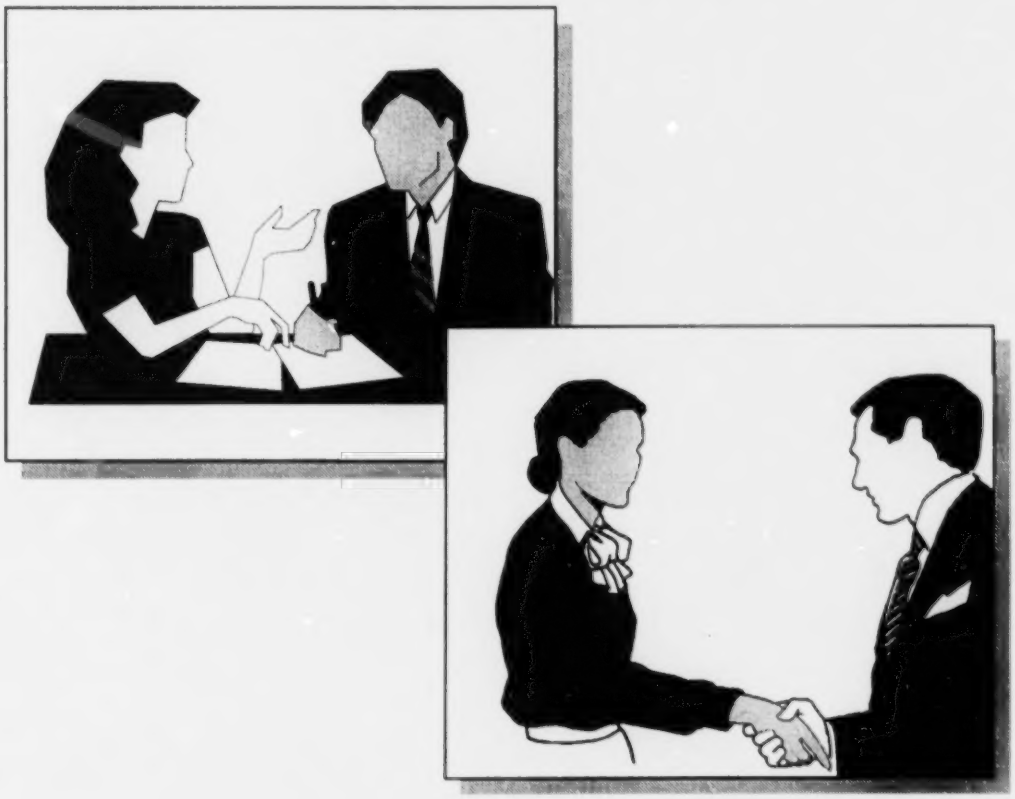
Chapter 4

Conflict Resolution



Just as conflict resolution education offers practice in skills basic to the goals of multicultural education, so does multicultural education teach the awareness, knowledge, and values needed for effective conflict resolution.

—Kathryn Girard and Susan Koch
Conflict Resolution in the Schools

Now that students have learned about their own cultures and cultural values and have started to understand those of others, they can move to the next step of learning how to resolve conflicts. Unfortunately, conflict resolution is not a skill that we are all born with. It involves a set of steps that have to be learned and remembered, just like the skills involved in baking a cake or fixing a car.

Many of us grow up being told to "keep the peace" or minimize our differences in order to get along. We get the message that conflicts are always negative and should be avoided. Girard and Koch (1996, 28–29), however, suggest an alternative attitude toward conflict:

1. Conflict is a natural part of social interaction.
2. Conflict can be productive and beneficial.
3. There is more than one way to approach a conflict; we can choose the way we become involved, both in the conflict itself and in its resolution.

Understanding the value of such an approach yourself will help you guide students to see conflict as an opportunity rather than a burden.

By identifying the cultural characteristics of all the parties involved in a conflict, however, we are better able to view cultural differences as differences, rather than as deficiencies, with fewer distortions of prejudice and stereotyping. Understanding each other's cultural codes (language, art, traditions, and behaviors) is an essential step in both conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

—Kathryn Girard and Susan Koch
Conflict Resolution in the Schools

Discussion and Reflection

Before students can learn conflict resolution skills, they must conquer their negative attitudes about conflict. Spend some time with students discussing Girard and Koch's ideas. Have students give examples from their own experiences that show the validity of these ideas.

Once students agree that conflict is not something to shy away from, they can start to learn a proactive approach to conflict resolution, which will help them resolve cultural conflicts that come up as they work through chapter 5 and in their lives, in school and out.

A Framework—the Three Rs

Just as there are three Rs in learning, Katz and Lawyer (1994, 29–31)) have come up with three Rs for successful conflict resolution. These three qualities are necessary for any conflict to be resolved successfully.

Respect

Productive conflict takes place in an atmosphere of respect. We need to respect ourselves in order to get what we need out of a resolution; we need to respect the people with whom we're arguing in order to see their positions—which might be completely opposite of ours—as valid; and we need to respect the process of resolution.

Rapport (Relationship of Responsiveness)

Once we create an atmosphere of respect, it's much easier to enter into a rapport with other participants in a productive conflict. Rapport, or maintaining a relationship of responsiveness, is about active listening and empathy.

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Resourcefulness

Resolving a conflict requires creative problem solving, which in turn means knowing about the various resources you might use. Personal resourcefulness is also an important part of any conflict resolution—we need to be able to remain calm, focused, and logical in the face of situations that can quickly become terribly stressful.

Discussion and Reflection

As a class, brainstorm specific ways you can introduce the three Rs of conflict resolution into your classroom and other conflicts.

Listening

Now as never before we need the imagination, the dedication, the creativity of everyone to get society through the massive transformation required for a planetary society.

—Margaret Mead

It's easy to think that no special skills are involved in listening: people talk and we hear the words they say. We may believe that if we just pay attention and concentrate, we will have no problems understanding what someone says. This belief assumes that we hear and record as accurately as a tape recorder. But a tape recorder only records—it doesn't make sense out of what it "hears." We hear sounds—songs, screams, words, and so on—and filter them through our brains in order to understand the sounds. The process of creating understanding is different for each of us, since we all have unique brains and unique cultural filters. Unfortunately, these filters mean that five people listening to one person talk can each hear, or *perceive,* something entirely different from what the other four perceive. It's easy to see how this can aggravate cultural conflict!

Listening is important to the conflict resolution process because we have to understand what the conflict is from each person's point of view before we can think of solutions that everyone will accept. And because other points of view in an argument are probably going to be different from our own—we're *arguing,* after all—our knee-jerk reaction will usually be

Student Project

Choose three or four classmates with whom you have not worked before. Go over the three Rs for successfully resolving a conflict. Discuss how you would best illustrate each one.

Create a poster that clearly illustrates your ideas. Include a great deal of color and texture. Display the posters in prominent places in the classroom.

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not to listen. There are specific skills we can practice to make us better listeners, including not interrupting, trying to empathize with—or understand—the other person's feelings, asking clarifying questions, and trying to keep from judging what someone says.

Discussion and Reflection

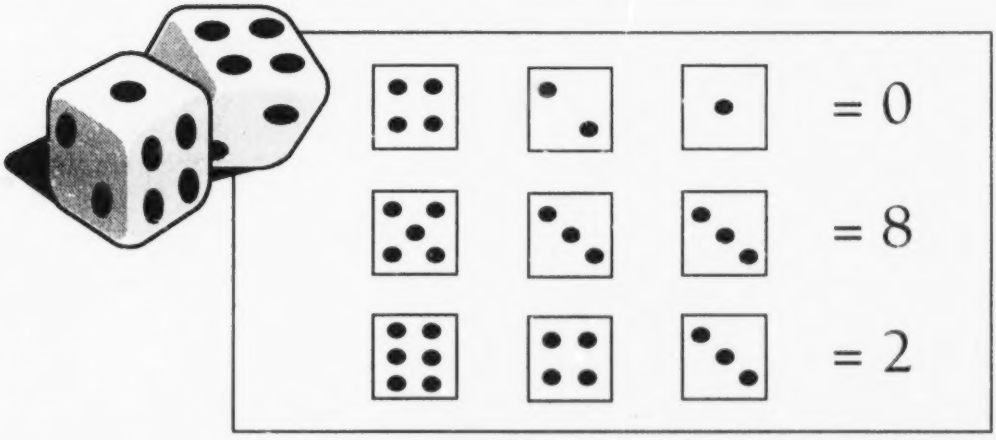
Use these two puzzles to illustrate the importance of listening carefully to hear everything that is said.

1. Take the Roman numeral 9 (IX) and make a 6 out of it using one line.

   Solution: Put an S in front of it. Listening to this puzzle, most people will hear "straight line," or "make the Roman numeral six," neither of which was actually said.

2. The second puzzle is about polar bears in the Arctic who are eating around a hole in the ice. With each roll of the dice, figure out how many bears are eating. Here are some examples:

   Solutions: The center dot on the numbers one, three, and five represents a hole in the ice. The numbers three and five represent two and four bears respectively eating around a hole, the number one has a hole with no bears, and the numbers two, four, and six have bears but no hole. If you don't listen carefully you don't hear the part about the hole.



Student Project

Choose a classmate as a partner. Decide who will be the drawer and who will be the describer in this exercise. The describer will find an abstract graphic design in a book or magazine; do not show it to your partner.

Sitting back to back so the drawer cannot see body language or hand signals, the describer will tell the drawer how to draw the chosen design. The drawer may ask questions and clarify directions, but may not look at the design itself. The describer may respond to questions but may not look at the drawer's sketch.

When you both feel you have completed the drawing, the describer may look at the drawer's rendition and the drawer may look at the original. How close did you get? Where did you go wrong and why? Be sure that you do not blame your partner for giving poor directions or not listening; instead, focus on how you could have communicated more effectively as listener and speaker. Switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Make photocopies of both drawings. (If copyright laws allow, you may also want to make photocopies of the originals.) Place the drawings in your scrapbook. Note on the drawings or on an adjacent page steps you will take to improve your listening and speaking skills, based on what you learned in this project.

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Six Steps

The purely agitational attitude is not good enough for a detailed consideration of a subject.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

Any kind of conflict, whether simple or complex, can benefit from following a set process to find a resolution. The following principles can be modified to account for the level of formality or informality of the argument. Sometimes not all six steps \are necessary, and sometimes each step needs to be divided into a lot of substeps in order to avoid stepping on anyone's toes. Once you know the general steps involved, you can decide—alone or in conjunction with the other people involved—which steps are important to each specific conflict. You may choose to discuss these steps separately in different class periods, or you may choose to discuss the process as a whole.

1. Agree to Negotiate

Depending on the depth of conflict and the number of people involved, this first step can range from a verbal agreement such as, "Well, let's talk about this and see if we can stop fighting," to a formal, written agreement. Whatever the specifics of the agreement look or sound like, agreeing to negotiate means everyone agrees to the following points:

> I want to end this disagreement.
>
> I am willing to work with people with whom I disagree to find a solution.
>
> I am interested in hearing everyone's point of view regarding the problem since that will help us find a solution.

2. Gather Various Points of View

The second step in resolving a conflict is education oriented. The people involved share their individual points of view about the issue at hand in as much depth as they feel is necessary to convey their feelings and opinions. While each person talks, the other group members use active listening skills and maybe take notes.

Sharing your point of view means sharing your opinions, your beliefs, and your emotions. Later on, emotions get set aside, but right now is the time to let the other people involved know exactly how you feel. You also might help other people share their emotions by asking such questions as, "How do you feel about this?" or "How do you feel when . . . ?"

Once everyone has shared a point of view, spend some time reflecting on your own point of view and, just as importantly, on the points of view of the others involved. Being open to resolving a conflict means being able to understand and recognize the value of perspectives other than your own. You may want to use the work sheet from chapter 3 (page 105) to help you use critical thinking skills to analyze your perspective logically. This process will help you set aside your emotions for the next step. What opinions, prejudices, and critical thinking pitfalls in your argument can you identify?

No doubt there are other important things in life besides conflict, but there are not many other things so inevitably interesting.

—Robert Lynd

3. Find Common Interests

Problem solving starts as the group moves through four substeps.

1. Separate emotions about the issue from needs regarding a solution. Think back to the point of view you shared in the previous step. Make a two-column list. At the top of the left column, write "I Need . . . ," and at the top of the right column, write "I Feel . . . " Spend some time brainstorming items for each column. Put into the "I Need" column phrases that contain action words (verbs) and put descriptive words (adjectives) into the "I Feel" column.
2. Summarize emotions for one another. Agree to put emotions away in order to focus on resolving the conflict based on each person's needs. Before the resolution process moves toward finding common interests, people involved have one more opportunity to share their individual emotional responses to the conflict while the other group members use active listening skills. After each person has shared his or her "I Feel" list, review your original commitment to negotiate the problem,

People think, feel, and behave the way they do in response to their immediate familial contexts as well as to the larger cultural, historical, and sociopolitical context in which they live. Attempting to understand this context on a personal-to-international continuum can mean the difference between sympathy and empathy, disdain and compassion, intolerance and tolerance, isolation and communication, war and peace.

—Dorothy D. Hoffman
Linking through Diversity

then make a new group agreement to set aside emotional responses and concentrate on solving the problem by finding the answer to this question: What needs do we have in common?

3. Examine individual needs to find similarities. Even parties to an ancient, deeply rooted conflict have needs in common. Searching the needs out can take patience, time, and creativity, but they are always there. The common need does not have to be complex; it might be as simple as a need to reach an agreement at all, or a need to avoid the consequences of not reaching an agreement. As you did with the statements in the "I Feel" column, share the statements in your "I Need" column. While the other group members use active listening skills, phrase each need with the following formula: I need to (verb) (desired result) because (reason). In order to translate everyone's statement of needs into commonalities, listeners will have to ask clarifying questions to draw out the background reasons behind each need. In order to find similarities, the group might look at all the different parts of each participant's needs. Does everyone agree on the goal but not on the means to reach the goal? Are there similar needs regarding the means of reaching a goal but not on the goal itself? Are some goals shared, and others opposite? These are the kinds of questions that need to be explored before moving to the next step.
4. State shared needs as goals to be reached. Once a group has identified common needs in the conflict, the next step is to state those needs as specific, attainable, positive goals. This step encourages participants to remember that these shared interests are the group's best hope for ending the conflict. Once the shared needs are identified and stated as concrete goals, the group needs to make a further agreement to focus on reaching these goals, rather than on individual points of contention. If a participant still has a disagreement after the negotiating process is complete, the process can be repeated to negotiate through the remaining points of argument.

4. Create Win-Win Options

Now is the time to find solutions to the conflict that reach the common goal or goals identified in step 3. There are three ways to solve a conflict: win-win, win-lose, and lose-lose. A lose-lose resolution meets no one's needs, a win-lose resolution forces one party to put aside its needs so that another participant's needs can be attended to, and a win-win solution finds a way to accommodate everyone's need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

At this point, the group should commit to finding a win-win way to reach the common goals. The next step is to brainstorm a list of possible solutions, and then spend time brainstorming solutions that reach the group's goals without forcing anyone into the "loser" position. At this point the focus should be on accumulating as many potential solutions as possible, without worrying whether they are actually feasible. It may stimulate the brainstorming process if each person shares with the group all the different ways he or she can think of to be in a "winner" position regarding the conflict.

When one ceases from conflict, whether because he has won, because he has lost, or because he cares no more for the game, the virtue passes out of him.

—Charles Horton Cooley

5. Evaluate All Options

Using the list of possible resolutions that were developed in step 4, the group now needs to prioritize them in terms of the following criteria:

- what will work
- what is practical
- which solution(s) are best for the group as a whole
- what solution is most acceptable to each member of the group—in other words, which option requires the easiest compromises
- what would be a fair agreement

As the group evaluates all the possibilities, they need to make sure they understand the implications and consequences of each solution for each member of the group. Also, the solution might influence people who are not members of the negotiating group; what might the consequences of the agree-

ment be for those people? Might the solution impact what someone else, or another group, considers to be sacred ground—or nonnegotiable?

6. Create Agreement

In this step, the group reaches consensus on the best of the possible solutions proposed in step 5. The dictionary defines *consensus* as pure unanimity; everyone agrees that a statement is true for them personally. In negotiations to resolve conflicts, however, consensus means that everyone puts aside some of his personal preferences and goals in order to select an option that is best for the group's goals.

To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

After the group members have reached consensus, they outline a specific plan of action to attain the goals if such a plan is necessary. Otherwise, they shake hands all around or set out the agreement in a more formal way. Sometimes, it's helpful for each participant to have a written record of the decision-making process, the chosen resolution, and the plan of action.

Discussion and Reflection

Do this activity either outside and draw lines in the dirt or place sticks in a line, or inside using string to create the lines. Pairs of students stand face-to-face, two students on either side of the line or string. The students' job is to get their partners to cross the line in any way they can think of, as many times as they can, in the few minutes allotted. When you say time's up, they stay where they are.

When the exercise is over, respond to the following questions as a group:

1. How did you try to get your partner to move? Did what you tried work?
2. Did anybody figure out a way for both people to get the job done? (Hopefully, at least one pair will figure out that switching sides or taking turns lets both partners succeed more often.)

Ask for volunteers to act out the various situations: win-lose (one student moves); lose-lose (no one moves); and win-win (partners take turns). Tally the numbers of pairs who ended up with each type of solution. Which type of solution (win-win, win-lose, or lose-lose) was most common in your classroom? Discuss reasons for this with students. Ask them what they think is necessary to increase the number of win-win situations in your classroom.

Agreeing to Disagree

What renders the least flicker of an argument so profitless, so sterilizing, is that the minds of both the disputants are turned towards something quite different from either's authentic inner truth.

—John Cowper Powys

As students have been discovering, we all have particular values and opinions that we're probably never going to change our minds about. Sometimes a conflict is directly about one of these values; other times, one of these values might indirectly affect a conflict that on the surface seems to be about something else. For example, as a teacher, I may believe my primary obligation is to my students. All other considerations are subordinate to that. Someone else may believe my main obligation is to the institution at which I teach. For conflict resolution to be effective, participants need to identify these nonfalsifiable—or nonnegotiable—beliefs. There may be no way to negotiate through a conflict, so strong are our nonnegotiable values.

This point is very important: *Sometimes resolving a conflict means accepting the fact that there is no resolution.* You may have heard people express this feeling with the following statement: "Can we just agree to disagree?" The principle of agreeing to disagree is related to the principle of tolerance versus acceptance.

Nonnegotiable values that underlie a conflict are not necessarily insurmountable barriers to communication or conflict resolution. Identifying your own nonnegotiables and those of the people you're in conflict with can help keep the negotiation process from being perceived as a personal attack. When this is the case, identifying and discussing these nonfalsifiable beliefs might help participants find a way through the problem.

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Discussion and Reflection

Discuss the idea of nonnegotiable ideas with your students. Share with them some of your own nonnegotiable beliefs. Have them list in their scrapbooks resolutions to conflicts that may be compromised by your beliefs.

You will need to find articles on such controversial topics as women's rights, fetal tissue research, religion in the schools, student rights, sex education, constitutional rights, parental rights, the value of education, or anything else that you feel may cause some controversy in your class. After students have chosen groups, pass out to each group one article. Each group will have an article on a different topic.

Students will combine what they have learned about themselves and their cultures in chapter 2 with the critical thinking skills they learned in chapter 3 and the conflict resolution skills in this chapter. They can develop ways to apply all these skills to specific topics, testing their skills and thus making the skills stronger. Remember that there is no one correct answer in any scenario; there will certainly be incorrect methods of approaching the problem. An incorrect method is one that contributes to the problem rather than helping solve it. The point of comparing their written records of the conflict resolution process to a video- or audiotape is to illustrate the problems with listening and hearing everything that is said.

Assign students to groups of five or six. As a group, they will read the articles assigned to their groups and keep track of the authors' premises and conclusions. Did the author fall into any critical thinking pitfalls? Which ones? Groups will discuss what emotions the article causes each individual to feel. Tape record or videotape the groups as they strive to reach consensus on the issue. You may need to have students do the work on different days so you can be sure to catch everything the groups says and does.

After groups have reached consensus, students individually recount in their scrapbooks what they think happened. They will write an informal script of sorts. Groups share their written records with the rest of the small groups, then watch the videotapes or listen to the tape recordings. They will discuss the differences among their recollections and between what each of them remembers and what the recording shows. What are the differences? Why do they think the differences occurred?

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Student Project

Review the information that you discovered about yourself in the religion, morals and values, foods, and education sections of chapter 2. Look for your nonnegotiable beliefs. Be honest—there is no right or wrong answer. We all have nonfalsifiable beliefs.

In small groups, compare your nonfalsifiables with those of your classmates. Do this step for information only; it's not about debating whose nonfalsifiables are "right" or "wrong"—there's no such thing. Are there similarities in the *areas* of belief, if not the specifics? Are there similarities in the areas of nonfallibility? Why do you think that is? What does the fact that there are similar areas tell you about yourselves and others?

As a class, develop a model dialogue that people can use to find out whether someone's stated position, opinion, or belief is nonfalsifiable; to preserve the integrity of these beliefs; to avoid personal conflict; and to allow someone to open a closed mind. The model might be a series of yes or no questions, with a certain score for the degree of nonfalsifiability. Or you might create a flow chart. The kinds of questions that are good at helping identify a nonnegotiable or nonfalsifiable belief include, "If there was evidence disproving your position/belief or that might cause you to reconsider it, would you?" "If I gave you a million bucks, would you reconsider?" "If no one would ever find out, would you consider changing your mind?" Practice using the model once or twice for classroom conflicts and make changes to it as necessary.

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Chapter 5

Putting It All Together

An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that theory has vital and verifiable significance.

—John Dewey

As students learned in chapter 1, the societies that have the best chance at long-term success are those that creatively solve the problems presented to them. Creative societies tend to be ones that consist of more than one cultural group; they can use the best aspects of many different cultures to solve difficult problems. Creativity makes a civilization great.

However, just because multiculturalism is positive for a society doesn't mean it's easy for the people. When cultures mix, the process can be chaotic, can cause insecurity, and can seem inefficient. People may lose their identities and find it hard to relate to the cultural memories and values of their parents or grandparents, which in turn can put a lot of stress on the family structure. Of course, a homogeneous culture is secure, there is no question about your identity, and it can be very efficient. But it can also become stagnant or extinct unless it finds a way to adapt as the world changes.

The world is more and more of a neighborhood, but is it any more of a humanhood? Unless we learn to live together as brothers and sisters we shall perish together as fools!

—Martin Luther King Jr.

In chapter 2 we explored in detail exactly what a culture is. Students learned about their own cultures—and about themselves and their families in the process. From our culture we learn our religion, morals and values, the roles we're supposed to play as girls and boys and women and men, our language or languages, family and personal ceremonies, oral traditions and stories, traditional recipes and cures for illness, what kinds of educational and government systems we value, technical skills, and how to behave in business. When we put together all these different pieces, we get a picture of our cultural identity.

My cultural picture might be very different from my neighbor's. When we put these together as individuals and then try to put the individuals together to form a culture, if these cultural pictures differ a lot it can result in conflict, but it can also be an excellent opportunity for creativity.

Throughout students' lives, they will be presented with opportunities to work with people who have a cultural picture that looks nothing like their own. They will have a great number of opportunities for choosing either to be in conflict or to deal creatively with the differences. This chapter gives students a chance to practice—in a safe classroom space—what they have

learned about culture in general, their cultures in particular, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. They will work in small groups to create a new, diverse culture that draws from all the best aspects of each group member's cultural identity. At each step, they will be asked to brainstorm as a group ideas about real-life problems—either in or out of school—that the critical thinking and consensus building they're doing could help them resolve. This chapter is different from the others in that it is primarily the application of the theories and skills students have learned in the previous chapters. Consequently, it is comprised mostly of student projects that lead to students' developing their own culture.

As students work through these projects, remind them to refer to the notes they took in chapter 2. Also remind them that the most successful societies not only have multiple cultures but allow each culture to retain its individualism and have a mass culture that members of each individual culture can support without being untrue to themselves.

A world community can exist only with world communication, which means something more than extensive shortwave facilities scattered about the globe. It means common understanding, a common tradition, common ideas, and common ideals.

—Robert M. Hutchins

Discussion and Reflection

If you can spare the time, spend several days having students review what they have learned. Offer them a variety of opportunities to codify their learning. Give them time for reflection in their scrapbooks. Have them work in small groups to practice the skills they learned in chapter 4. Suggest they interview people for more information. Have them bring in cultural artifacts and discuss the unique beauty of each, its role in the culture that produced it, and its value to the world at large. Be as creative and open minded as you possibly can be to allow students to consolidate, internalize, and take ownership of what they have learned.

Throughout this chapter, students will work on defining and developing their own cultures. Before beginning the student project, you may want to introduce a set of ground rules. Enlist students' help in drawing up the rules. The rules should include the rules of active listening and the

It is always a magnificent sight when great masses of people are able to collectively harmonize on extremely high moral frequencies. It is comparable to a sunrise.

—Alice Walker

six steps to negotiation, but students may also come up with great ideas that will encourage respect and peaceful resolution of all the conflicts that will arise in the course of their learning. Students may find it helpful to create a class poster with the rules you come up with.

Divide the class into groups of four to six students and provide each group with a space to work and time each day to work on their culture.

Student Project
Group Value Wheel

Examine the value wheel you created in chapter 2. Based on what you learned in chapter 3, write down some of the opinions, premises, and inferences that underlie your values.

Defend your values to the others in your group. While you make your defense, your classmates should try to write down some of the opinions, premises, and inferences that they hear in your argument. Compare what your classmates heard to what you wrote down. What are the differences and similarities? Why do you think your classmates see your opinions, premises, and inferences differently from the way you see them?

Exchange value wheels with someone else in the group. Defend the new value wheel to the group as if it were yours, while your classmates write down some of the opinions, premises, and inferences that they hear in your argument. Compare their lists with the list you came up with when the wheel's owner defended it. What are the similarities and differences?

Compare the assumptions you made in defending your value wheel with the ones someone else made defending it. If there is a difference, why? Is it the result of bias or unfairness? What could you do to amend your assumption so it is not biased?

In order to create the wheel for the group, compare the hubs and spokes of the individual wheels. Are any of the hubs the same? Are any of the spokes the same? If any of your ideas about the central good are in direct conflict, use

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Student Project (continued)

critical thinking and negotiation skills to resolve the conflict by consensus; otherwise, you might be able to put them all in the middle of the group wheel you will create next. The same is true of the spokes. It is very important that you reach a consensus and that the whole group understands and is comfortable with the terms; otherwise there will be no basis for any of your other negotiations on how to construct the society. On the other hand, don't be afraid of diversity. Be creative—it's your culture.

Create a group value wheel. Group members individually explain their values one more time, adding on which values—if any—they are willing to compromise and which they refuse to give up. Group members should use active listening and open-ended questioning skills to make sure that they understand the views of the others in the group.

Congratulations! You have successfully negotiated through your first cultural conflict! This new group value wheel will be important as you go through the rest of the steps in creating your new culture. It can help you remember what areas you have in common with your classmates and help you come up with ideas for win-win situations in future conflicts. Think about the real-life conflicts a project like this help you resolve. List some of them in your scrapbook.

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Student Project
Religion

Discuss with your group the different kinds of religious beliefs you all hold. Find a common ground on how your created culture will handle the various religious beliefs. It is very important that whatever consensus you reach allows for each member to express individual religious beliefs without infringing on the rights of others. You may decide that the best thing for your culture to do is to have only one religion, outlaw religion, create a new one, or make freedom of choice a part of your culture.

In your scrapbook, list real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Morals and Values

Discuss with your group some of your deeply held morals and values. Look carefully at your value wheel and address all the issues that fall under this category. Create ways to handle moral and value concerns. Will you tie morals and values to religion? Will there be penalties, social or other kinds, for moral infractions?

In your scrapbook, list real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Superstitions

Most superstitions have cultural roots. Besides addressing a fear or a hope, a superstition tells a story about things that are important in the culture. In chapter 2, you heard about superstitions from classmates. Are any of these superstitions usable for your new culture? Can some be combined with others to create a new superstition? Create new superstitions—perhaps about gender roles, marriage, money, or food—that are consistent with the decisions you made regarding religion and morals. What about luck? Are there lucky and unlucky things? How do these fit with the rest of the culture?

In your scrapbooks, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Food

Develop specific dishes or a "cultural cuisine" that reflects your new culture. You might find a way to combine the various foods from the cultures of group members. Combining is a common way for cultures to develop foods that are now identified with their culture. For example, Mexican cuisine combines Spanish and Native American foods. Another way to complete this project would be to research which foods are locally available. Then combine those foods with some of the cooking methods that group members' cultures use.

As we learned in chapter 2, a culture's traditional foods and home remedies are often related. Use information from group members to develop a traditional medicine for your new culture. What might the medicine be for? How will you know that it'll work? What will the remedy consist of? Traditional herbs or foods from each individual's culture? Herbs or foods available locally?

Make the foods and some of the medicinal remedies your culture has adopted. Remember—good taste is just as important to success as creativity!

In your scrapbook list real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project Symbols

Design a flag for your new culture. You may either combine symbols that are meaningful to individual members of your group or create one from scratch. However you go about it, the flag should symbolically reflect decisions you've made about what your culture will be like.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Art

Decide what kind of artistic endeavors your culture would be willing to give money to support. How can you define *art* to do this? Can art be subjectively defined and still be funded? What kinds of art, if any, will be excluded from your support. Develop a list of the criteria you will use to determine what art will be funded. Find examples in magazines and your homes of art that you think represents your group's created culture. Bring it in and have group members evaluate it based on the criteria you determined.

In your scrapbooks, list real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Oral Traditions and Stories

Create two or three stories that reflect your new culture. The stories could be based on something that the group has actually done together, or you could make up some stories to convey morals and values in the form of allegories. Listen to individual group members' stories and rework them for the group. In your stories or myths convey the cultural truths of your religion, morals and values, gender roles, or any of the other parts of your culture. Let your creativity run wild as you put some of these stories in the form of nursery rhymes, short stories, and historical tales. Make your stories as easy to memorize as to read.

In your scrapbooks, list real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Language

Will your culture be multilingual or monolingual? Which languages will be spoken in your culture? If you choose multilingualism, how will you handle official and educational documents? In what language will ceremonies be conducted? If you choose monolingualism, what will happen to those who do not speak the official language? If you forbid a particular language, how will you acknowledge the fact that language and culture go hand in hand and that you may destroy a culture if you destroy the language? If you choose to be monolingual, consider choosing a language that no one knows in order to be fair to everyone. What are the pros and cons of that option? Create several official documents in the official language. Although official documents aren't necessarily part of a culture but part of a society, such documents have a large cultural impact.

In your scrapbooks, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Family

Determine your cultural definition of *family* and related terms. What relatives will you include in your definition of *immediate family*? What relatives will you include in your definition of *extended family*? How will you handle divorce? How will children be raised? Will parents raise children, or will the governing body of your culture decide how they will be raised? What role will each family member play in decision making and providing for the family's comfort? Think about the effects your definitions will have on individual group members. Write out ten decisions your group makes regarding families.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts such a project could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Marriage

Create a marriage ceremony that takes into account your group's value wheel, as well as all the information you learned in chapter 2. Should marriages be arranged? Should the wedding ceremony be religious, secular, or both? What should the rules regarding divorce and child custody be? What are the roles of in-laws in a marriage? Write out your wedding ceremony.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts such a project could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Gender Roles

Decide how you want the sexes to divide their responsibilities in your created culture. If you decide not to create rigid gender roles, how would you account for the ideas that some things are done better by one sex than the other? Are the roles you assign to the sexes consistent with the decisions you made regarding religion, family structure, and morals and values?

Make a Venn diagram to display the roles. A Venn diagram is overlapping circles. Label one circle "Male," the other "Female," and the common part "Both." In the parts of each circle that do not overlap, list the roles that each sex will perform that the other will not. In the overlapping section, list the roles that they will share.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this help you resolve.

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Student Project
Government and Law

Determine what kind of government your culture will live under. It can be any kind you want, either one that you learned about in chapter 2, or a new kind that combines aspects of a couple different forms. Where will the government's right to rule come from: the people, the religion, or military might? How is the source of the government's right to rule justified in the other parts of the culture? Where will the government's right to rule stop and start? How will the government be structured? How will people in your culture react if the government does something with which they don't agree? Make an illustrated chart of the officials in your government and the powers and duties they will wield and control.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Education

Define what your culture thinks the purpose and the role of education are. How will members of your culture pass the culture's important traditions and information from generation to generation? Should education be structured by the state, determined by the family, or both? What will be taught and what will not? Why? Should any particular types of education be mandated by the government—that is, is there anything that everyone in the culture should be required to learn? Make sure that you create an educational system that is in keeping with the rest of the aspects of your new culture. Write a teacher's guide that includes instructions about the decisions you made.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts a projects such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Science and Technology

What kind of ways will your new culture use to solve food production, housing, and transportation problems, taking into account the environment in which your culture exists? How will your culture create explanations for the world around you? Through scientific exploration? Religion? Mythology? This part of cultural development requires that you learn from the past and from the members of your culture, but that you not be so tied to other cultures or to the past that you are immobilized from solving the problem in the present using what ever tools are available.

Choose a problem listed in this exercise. As a group, draft a proposal for solving the problem using technology that is culturally appropriate. Address your proposal to the appropriate official in the government you created.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Business and Trade

The economic well-being of a culture depends on methods it uses for trading among members and with those of other cultures. In your new culture, create a way for trade and business to flourish. Consider the following: What is the role of reciprocity in your class culture? What is the role of profit? Will your culture have a central standard of value? How will it be determined? Will there be taxation? If not, how will you pay for whatever services the government provides? How will your culture interact with various cultures that have rules for trade different from yours? As a group, draft a letter, complete with diagrams, that explains your philosophies about business and trade.

In your scrapbook, list several real-life conflicts that a project such as this could help you resolve.

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Student Project
Culture Map

As you did at the beginning of chapter 2, make a culture map for the culture you and your classmates have created. In what ways are the various aspects of culture connected? Do some aspects stand alone? Which ones? Are any aspects connected to all other aspects? Which ones? As a group, discuss what the culture map tells you about the underlying values of your new culture. Compare the new culture map with each of your original maps. What are the differences? Similarities? Are they similar to the differences and similarities between your value wheels?

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Student Project
Creating a Class Culture

For further development of the skills you've learned in this unit and as an example of how cultures change through time, how intertwined all elements are, and how people from other cultures influence the core cultural group, repeat the above exercises with your class. Negotiate a new, class culture that combines the aspects of all the small groups' cultures. Appoint one member of each group to speak for the group as the class negotiates through differences of opinion regarding each cultural aspect to reach consensus. Start by creating a class value wheel, which will provide a useful framework for the rest of the process.

As a final step, make a class culture map. Compare this map to those of the small groups, and in turn to those of each class member. Spend some time discussing the differences and similarities. What do these maps tell you about cultural change? About consensus? About group values versus individual values?

Prepare a television special—write the story line, then act it out—to present your new class culture. Create "artifacts"—tools, a book of cultural stories, foods, and so on—to illustrate how this culture behaves; demonstrate its marriage and birth rituals; draw a diagram of its government structure; interview members of the culture who are involved in the educational system; and so on.

Present your television special to another class, and follow it up with a question-and-answer session, or perhaps a segment on the importance of conflict resolution to this culture.

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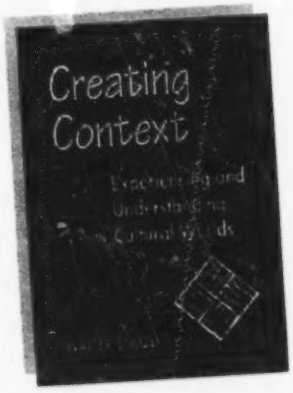

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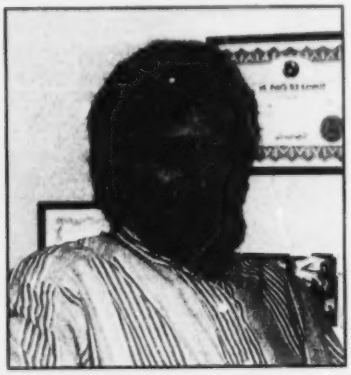

Stewart Barr teaches Western humanities, philosophy, and Asian religions at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona. He was voted by students as one of Pima's outstanding faculty members in 1991. He has participated in course development in the honors program, humanities, religion, and philosophy. He serves as a representative to the State Articulation Committee in Philosophy and Religion.

Stewart received an associate of arts degree in liberal arts from Pima Community College in 1974; a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy with a minor in comparative religions from the University of Arizona in 1976; a master of arts degree in Oriental studies with a minor in linguistics in 1978. He has written three Learning Packets for Zephyr Press: *Colonial America*, *The American Revolution*, and *The Constitution*.

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